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Window on Jordan

By Stephen Brannon
YOU WON'T find it mentioned in glossy tourist brochures. It isn't marked on any maps, and it certainly isn't "environmentally friendly." But the scores of Jordanian picnickers who happily head out to the Airport Highway each day don't seem to mind that their choice of recreational spots hasn't yet found favor in Amman's trendier circles.

Located only a few kilometers south of Amman (the most popular stretch is just before the turnoff to Marj Al Hammam), "Picnic Parkway" is one of the capital's most popular recreation spots. Each day, and especially on Fridays, carloads of city folks spill

off the Airport Highway, pop out their charcoal grills and *arghilehs* and relax with a measured dose of the outdoors. Work schedules and high summer temperatures keep the festivities to a minimum until later in the afternoon, but by 5:00 the place is hopping with activity. Some die-hard stalwarts have been known to stay on until 1:00 or 2:00 am.

To the motorist casually observing from behind the windshield, one question pops quickly to mind: Why would anyone want to have a picnic alongside a noisy, congested, dangerous highway? After a little first-hand observation and some insightful comments from friends, I'm a little closer to understand-

ing why.

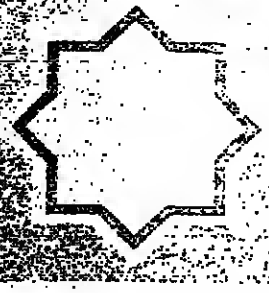
The Airport Highway picnic phenomenon has nothing to do with "Culture," and everything to do with "culture." The most important characteristic of "Picnic Parkway" culture is that it is completely family-oriented. A trip to the Airport Highway allows the family to get out of Amman for a while, where children have some space to run and play (hopefully not in the traffic!) and adults can relax by playing cards, talking, or just watching cars go by. Indeed, how different is Jordanian "car watching"



Or else we could go to the Airport Road and have a picnic!!

Continued on page 2

The Star

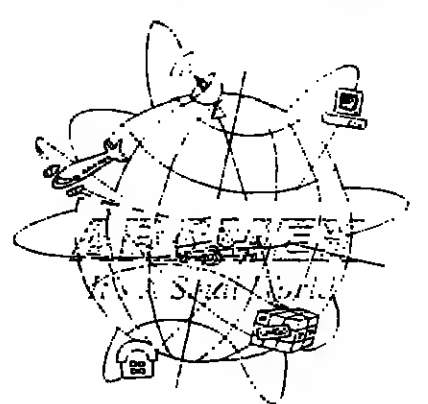


Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Comment Dakhsek a évité la mort

La nouvelle article... page 9



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AMMAN, 24 — 30 JULY 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 9, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

With little optimism Islamists, government prepare for dialogue over boycott decision

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer
ENDING SPECULATIONS about the possibility of extending the Lower House term, a Royal Decree was issued Wednesday, stating that the parliamentary elections will be held on time and according to article 34 of the Constitution.

However, analysts as well as key players on the local political scene have been busy for the past two weeks trying to seek an answer on why His Majesty the King did not yet consent on the Muslim Brotherhood's decision to boycott the coming parliamentary elections in November.

The King, who was out of the country when the Brother-

hood was debating its decision, has so far left it to the government to deal with the political fall-out resulting from the Brotherhood's decision. For decades, the Brotherhood were seen to have a direct access to the Palace. But so far, both sides have not shown signs that a direct channel of communication has been established to deal with the latest crisis.

The Muslim Brotherhood has played down the King's apparent indifference to their boycott decision saying that their "battle" was with the government and not the King.

"We decided to boycott [the elections] because we oppose many government policies and

regulations which we believe are harmful to the country and people," Jameel Abu Baker, spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood and one of the main architects of the Brotherhood's decision, told *The Star*. "Our differences are with the government, not with the King who is the reference for us and the government."

But Abu Baker revealed that the Royal Court had contacted officials in the Muslim Brotherhood to arrange a meeting with the movement's Overseer Mr Abdel Majeed Thuneibat, but declined to say if the planned meeting will be with the King, or other senior officials. He also said no specific date was agreed for convening the meeting.



PRECIOUS TUSKS—A villager in the Western Highlands of Zimbabwe transports an ivory tusk harvested from a recent elephant kill. As delegates to the International CITES Conference on Trade in Endangered Species begin to gather in Harare, a team from the US-based International Fund for Animal Welfare unearthed a cache of six ivory tusks taken from illegally poached elephants in this village bordering Chizarira National Park. Despite claims of strict controls by the National Parks Board it is estimated that 16 elephants are killed illegally each day in Zimbabwe. (Feature Photo Service)

Lifting ban on dairy products imports causes local protest

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer
THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to lift the ban on imports of milk and its by-products from Britain and other European countries is being met with a wide protest from local dairy producers and consumers alike. They consider such a decision as threatening national industry.

Health Minister Ashraf Al Kurdi last week sent a memo to the Ministers of Trade and Industry and Agriculture and to the Customs Dept. It informed them of the embargo lifting on milk imports and its related by-products from Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, Portugal, France and the Netherlands. This was upon a recommendation from the Kingdom's Health Council. Such a decision was based on a study by a special scientific committee on the effects of the "mad cow" disease on milk products. The ban was imposed a year and a half when many cases of "mad cow" disease were discovered in Britain and some European countries.

The decision was criticized by former Health Minister Dr Abdul Rahim Malhas who remains skeptical about the recent reports presented by the Health Ministry delegation

after a visit to Britain and Ireland that gave dairy products a clean bill of health. He says that there is still a very real danger and that the ban lifting was made because of outside pressure.

The National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) is furious. Its Director, Dr Mohammad Obeidat, told *The Star* that he was astonished at the decision which he said was made to please others.

He added that the Health Ministry must continue strict supervision and scientific testing, rather than let political or economic considerations influence its decision.

The society have received many complaints on the decision from consumers.

This reflects the public's awareness of the risk behind buying these products and shows their keenness to promote local produce.

Opponents of the lifting say that the milk is taken from many farms in Britain. And that's why the recent condition to state the country of origin or the farm where the milk is taken from is misleading and provides no definite evidence that there are no traces of the disease any more.

Continued on page 2

Arafat and Levy agree to relaunch talks

By Lionel Barber
Brussels—Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli foreign minister David Levy said they had agreed to relaunch peace talks suspended since March when Israel started building a new Jewish settlement in occupied east Jerusalem.

After a "frank and positive" meeting in Brussels Tuesday arranged by the European Union, Mr Levy indicated that he had received important assurances from Mr Arafat on security issues. The Israeli government has long been pressing the Palestinian leader to crack down on Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement.

"I was very satisfied with the message which I heard from Mr Arafat," the Israeli foreign minister told a news conference. "It [the peace process] must succeed. We do not have the right to fail."

Mr Arafat, who called Mr Levy his cousin, stressed the need to restart confidence-building measures. These include establishing a safe corridor between Gaza and the West Bank, opening an air and sea port in Gaza, and releasing political prisoners.

Mr Jacques Poos, foreign minister of Luxembourg which holds the rotating EU presidency, made clear that last

night's understanding between Mr Arafat and Mr Levy merely extended to relaunching peace talks. It was not an effort to reach a breakthrough on individual issues.

Both sides would work on a "code of conduct" to avoid fresh obstacles surfacing which could derail the peace talks—an indirect reference to the Israeli government's settlements policy.

The apparent breakthrough in the peace process follows an intensive round of shuttle diplomacy in the region by Mr Miguel Angel Moratinos, the EU's special Middle East envoy.

Mr Levy and Mr Arafat paid tribute to Mr Moratinos, who has been working alongside Mr Dennis Ross, the chief US Middle East envoy. However, the US has taken a lower profile in recent weeks following the breakdown in contacts between the two sides.

Last Sunday night, the Palestinian authorities uncovered a cell organized by Hamas. The timing looks more significant in the light of Tuesday's understanding, and may reflect concern on Mr Arafat's part that violence in the West Bank could undermine his authority.

The EU has long been a vociferous backer of Palestinian aspirations for a homeland,

The Brotherhood's decision has sent a series of political shockwaves, putting the government on the defensive as it prepares to organize new parliamentary elections. A number of small opposition parties have also announced their decision to boycott the elections bringing up the possibility that with a total boycott, the government will end up electing itself in November.

But observers believe the Islamists have not used up all their cards. Their political arm, the IAF party, is yet to announce its own decision on whether to join or boycott the

Israel hits at trade pact

By Frances Williams
GENEVA—Israel has criticized a free trade deal between the EU and the Palestinian Authority saying the deal does not comply with the Middle East peace accords.

The free trade agreement, which came into force at the beginning of this month, offers reduced tariffs for Palestinian exports to the EU and enhanced economic co-operation ahead of the EU-inspired creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone by 2010.

Mr Yair Shiran, Israel's representative to the WTO, told the WTO's council on trade in goods his country had reservations on the deal itself and the decision to send it for WTO

review. However, Israel refrained from blocking the council's decision referring the accord to the committee on regional trade arrangements.

Israeli officials said the EU-Palestinian agreement appeared inconsistent with the Oslo peace accords, notably the pact signed

in Washington in September 1995 which, according to Israel, does not permit the Palestinian Authority to enter independent trade agreements.

In addition, Israeli officials say, the accord with the EU treats the Palestinian-controlled

Continued on page 2

Reconstruction project belies Lebanon's problems

By Nicholas Goldberg
BEIRUT—In the heart of this war-ravaged city, where rival militias clashed ruthlessly for 15 years, a new Donna Karan outlet is doing brisk business and a nearby Armani boutique is crowded with well-dressed shoppers.

At a string of trendy new bars and fancy new French restaurants, patrons sit at tables on the sidewalks, and the reconstruction of this Mediterranean city, which in the 1970s and 1980s

became the world's most infamous symbol of senseless communal violence and destruction, seems somehow irreversible.

In recent months, a handful of five-star hotels have opened around town, along with a Hard Rock Cafe and a giant new sports center.

Last December, after a \$50 million refurbishment, the Casino du Liban, the grand old playground of Arab kings, oil sheiks and European socialites, which closed down during the civil war, reopened. In downtown Beirut, almost 700 war-damaged buildings have been razed to make way for a mas-

sive complex of skyscrapers and luxury homes.

"This is the heart of Beirut, the heart of the capital, the heart of Lebanon," said Rached Fayed, a senior official with Solidere, the giant private consortium that is undertaking the \$1.8 billion downtown reconstruction project. "When we are done, the city's financial district will again become one of the most important in the Middle East."

But despite the hype, and despite much enthusiasm for the reconstruction, it's not that simple. Just a few blocks from the downtown project lie reminders that years of war are not easily wiped away—a lesson Serbs, Croats and Somalis, among oth-

Continued on page 2

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Picnic culture hits the road

Continued from page 1

from the sophisticated "people watching" of Europe's cafe culture?

Perhaps the main drawing point for an Airport Highway picnic, though, is that people feel that their families are safe there. As the saying goes, there is safety in numbers, and with each family comfortably parked within ten to fifteen meters of the next, there is little opportunity for mischief-making. After dark, the bright lights of the highway allow picnickers to feel safe enough to keep the festivities going until late.

The close proximity to the highway, fellow picnickers and good lighting make for a decidedly "public" setting, which not only allows people to feel safe, but also makes certain anti-family activities rather difficult to practice. Asked why plenty of Jordanians prefer to pass time alongside a congested highway rather than get away from the noise and pollution in one of the nearby parks, one woman pointed out that she has never encountered anyone drinking alcohol on the Airport Highway, while in isolated areas of the parks this might be a problem.

I might add also that the dangerous germ

of romance cannot survive for long under the harsh public scrutiny of Picnic Parkway, while the secluded groves of the Amman National or Ghamadan Park have been said to provide a haven for amorous adventures. The Airport Highway is no Lovers' Lane, and families are free from corrupting influences there. In short, the location is private enough for families to sit back and enjoy a cool evening away from home without being disturbed, yet public enough to induce a feeling of safety and wholesomeness.

We can safely say that picnicking along the Airport Highway is an automobile-centered phenomenon of the middle class. Unlike the hour-long waits endured to get a cheeseburger from McDonald's drive-through, however, no one can say that Jordanians are imitating the West in this case. Picnic Parkway is a genuinely local manifestation of the global cult of the automobile. From the moment the family piles into the car in the afternoon until they return home later that night, chances are good that not a single member has ventured more than 10 meters from the automobile. And let's not forget that one of the favorite activities of the outing is watching other cars

roar by.

Yes, an automobile is a standard equipment for a picnic on the Airport Highway. I suppose you could take a taxi, but your requested destination may sound a little silly and finding a ride back would be difficult. The fact that a car is needed also cuts out the bands of roving teenage shahab who throng together in other middle-class family attractions such as the King Abdullah Gardens and the Al Jubeiha Amusement Park. Not having to ignore unwanted stares, women can feel a bit more at ease while enjoying a few hours away from the strains of normal life.

Picnicking on the Airport Highway is definitely not a pastime for the rich, who can afford to dine in a more luxurious setting, or for the poor, who may not have access to a car or be able to afford the meal that is *de rigueur* for true grilling aficionados. It caters instead primarily to middle-class families of modest resources and conservative values.

In addition to families out for a casual picnic, this stretch of the Airport Highway supports a thriving array of entrepreneurs. Produce vendors sell a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, mostly to motorists



passing by, while young men sell horse rides and coffee to settled picnickers. This may not be exactly what the IMF or the World Bank has in mind, but it is certainly small-scale income generation!

While Picnic Parkway is an attractive option for many Jordanian families for a number of reasons, its growth in popularity has not been mirrored by improved facilities. The unsightly litter sprinkled throughout the area could be greatly alleviated by some well-placed garbage cans. Likewise, a public toilet would allow a more comfortable stay for many unfortunate visitors.

Perhaps the biggest problem, however, is the hypnotic dance between drivers trying to exit the highway at the same time that others are rejoining the stream of combustion plowing ahead at full throttle. To their credit, the police have slowed traffic down with a radar trap right before the most congested area, and a luxury Rest Stop consisting of a partially completed strip of asphalt has been built. But let's hope the safety trend doesn't go too far. If it does, things could get a little boring along the Airport Highway. And after all, that would ruin the show, wouldn't it?

Reconstruction project belies Lebanon's problems

Continued from page 1

ers, might want to take to heart—and that a face-lift, in the end, is only a face-lift.

Here, along the old "green line" that separated East Beirut from West, the buildings remain shattered and destroyed, as if the 15-year war ended just yesterday rather than seven years ago. Roofs have been entirely blown off, balconies charred by repeated bombings, facades pitted and pocked by years of machine-gun fire. Despite their obvious unsuitability, almost all the buildings are inhabited, as evidenced by the laundry hanging from their crumbling facades. The residents are squatters, mostly, whose own lives remain shattered and dislocated by the war.

In the apartment of Khoder Haddad, a 24-year-old part-time government employee, a missile banged off one wall during the civil war and exploded on the other, leaving two holes 6 feet in diameter in his walls. The building no longer has running water or electricity, except for what Haddad and the 11 relatives who live with him can steal from the wires that pass by their windows or siphon from the pipes on the street. There are no doors or windows, just holes in the walls.

"It's nice that they are rebuilding the country, I guess, but we poor people will remain poor," he said in an interview.

"It won't do anything for us. Here, if you have money, you eat, and if not, you starve."

Rebuilding a country after a civil war is not easy—particularly one with 17 sects of Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Maronite Christians and Druze still unsure of one another, and more than 300,000 Palestinian refugees living in squalid camps. There is also fighting with Israel continuing in the south, and more than 30,000 Syrian troops occupying the rest of the country. A recent United Nations report found that one-third of Lebanon lives below the poverty line.

The government of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has undertaken its ambitious reconstruction plan despite these obstacles. Hariri, a billionaire real-estate developer who made his fortune in Saudi Arabia, clearly hopes that encouraging outside investment, inviting foreign companies to relocate in Beirut, and rebuilding the country as a financial center will have trickle-down benefits for the needy as well.

It was the Hariri government, for instance, that decided the casino should be reopened. A once-grand palace where Frank Sinatra sang and which rivaled Monte Carlo, it had been taken over by rival Christian militias during the war and eventually closed. Since reopening in December, the casino has been

consistently crowded, with an average of 1,500 people coming through each night to play blackjack, roulette, slot machines and poker, according to Nicholas Crabtree, vice president of its London-based management company. The complex includes five restaurants, a 1,200-seat theater and, soon, a five-star hotel.

And Solidere, another Hariri brainchild, intends to finally take action on the tallest building in Beirut, a 34-floor office tower built in the 1970s, which sat empty for a quarter of a century and became a sniper's nest during the civil war. Now it is set to become the Beirut Trade Center, complete with a rooftop restaurant, 660-space parking garage and luxury offices for some of the thousands of companies Hariri hopes to lure to town.

The entire cost of repairing the war damage and rebuilding the capital has been estimated at \$35 billion or more.

But the plans have been controversial at every step. Critics argue that Solidere's decision to demolish rather than renovate virtually all of the old buildings in the 400-acre downtown rehabilitation area will change the character of the city, irrevocably and for the worse. They also argue that the 120,000 people who were relocated to make way for the project were not suitably compensated. Thou-

sands of commercial tenants were relocated as well.

Of even more concern is the fact that the middle-income and luxury apartments being built will be far out of the price range of most of Beirut's residents.

"Most of the people in Lebanon are poor and will not be able to put aside what it takes to pay the principal and interest on a newly built apartment in this new neighborhood," said Kamal Hamden, an economist with a private consulting firm in Beirut. "The truly needy will not be the beneficiaries here."

Hariri himself has come under sharp criticism for his personal role in the lucrative reconstruction project: With 6 percent, he is now the largest shareholder in Solidere. He has invested more than \$125 million in the company's stock, and he stands to earn far, far more.

"The whole plan is designed to enrich the developers, who acquired it low—just crumbling buildings in a destroyed neighborhood—and now most of the infrastructure work is being paid for by the taxpayers," said Assem Salam, head of the Lebanese Institute of Architects and Engineers.

A more practical problem with the reconstruction plan is that the country is in the midst of an economic slowdown. There are apparently 60,000 or 70,000 vacant apartments in the city, and some people are worried the city has already been overbuilt. What's more, the building projects have required heavy borrowing and the country is falling deeper in debt.

LATimes-Washington Post News Service

Islamists, government prepare for dialogue

Continued from page 1

elections. The delay in the IAF's decision has left the door open for behind-the-scenes negotiations between the government and the Islamist leadership.

At the heart of the Brotherhood's decision is a bitter discontent with the government policies. The Brotherhood is demanding constitutional reforms, a freeze on temporary laws and a halt in normalization moves with Israel—among other things. Initial government reaction appeared to close the door on a compromise. But Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali has since hinted that he was open for dialogue.

The change in tone gave Speaker of the Lower House, whose term has not yet ended, the opportunity to step forward and initiate dialogue with political parties. He is seen to play the role of mediator between the government and the Islamist leadership.

The Brotherhood's leadership welcomed the principle of dialogue, but demanded that the government talk to all opposition groups and respond positively to their demands.

"We aim at a dialogue that serves the highest interests of the country," said Thunibat. "The dialogue should be based on the fact that there is a national crisis. We have to reach tangible results out of this dialogue."

logue, to persuade our members and cadres to reverse the boycott decision."

However, Dr Bassam Al Umoush, a leading activist who is considered a moderate Islamist within the Brotherhood and the IAF, is pessimistic of the outcome of the expected dialogue. "This dialogue will be useless since both sides have different interests."

He differs with his movement's boycott decision, "I support participation at any price, because we are a reformist group, which should not isolate itself," he said. Recently, Umoush confined himself to his house in Zarqa in a show of protest against the Brotherhood's decision.

While the hardliners within the Brotherhood appear to be to the driver's seat, it is difficult to say how things will go for the IAF Shura Council which will be meeting today, Thursday.

Earlier this week the IAF's Executive Council adopted the Brotherhood's decision to boycott elections. Barring a last minute compromise, the IAF's Shura Council is expected to follow suit, since 70 percent of its members answer to the Brotherhood.

The Islamist's move has given the opposition a fresh mandate to strike at the government and its policies. The 10-member opposition parties

are holding extensive meeting to finalize their stands, however, four parties have already decided to boycott the elections. They are: People's Democratic Front (Hashd), the Arab Constitutional Front, the [pan-Arabist] National Action Front and the Ansar Party.

Also the Council of Presidents, comprising the heads of the 12 Professional Associations, which is mostly dominated by Islamists and leftists, has adopted the Brotherhood's stand. The Council accused the government of closing the door before dialogue and called on opposition groups to follow the steps of the Brotherhood.

Next week, dialogue between the opposition, particularly the Islamists, and the government is expected to start. According to Mr Nasser Al Lawzi, acting minister of state for information affairs, the government welcomes dialogue with any party concerning the parliamentary elections. "The doors of dialogue are wide open for everybody," Al Lawzi said after a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Israel hits at trade pact

Continued from page 1

territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a separate trade entity. This breaches another protocol to the Washington accord which stipulates a "single customs envelope" for Israel and the self-rule areas. Israel already has a free trade pact with the EU.

Finally, Israel thinks the agreement should not have

been brought to the WTO because notified free trade accords should relate, under WTO rules, to deals between customs territories with a significant degree of autonomy. The self-rule areas do not conform with that definition, Israel says.

Financial Times Syndication

Mediterranean and NMC play Tchaikovsky at Jerash

IN ONE of the most prominent and eagerly anticipated musical performances in the Jerash Festival, the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra with its 94 musicians along with the Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory, under the baton of well-known maestro Henry Gailois, will perform Tchaikovsky's brilliant Capriccio Italian on Friday, 25 July at the North Theater in Jerash.

The Capriccio Italian has been described as a "hurdle of Italian folk tunes," but it is also really very Russian. Tchaikovsky drew his material partly from published collections of Italian folk songs and partly from music he heard while touring Italy in 1880.

Tchaikovsky sketched the entire Capriccio in Rome during the winter and spring and began the orchestration there. He completed the score when he returned to Russia and it was given its first performance in Moscow on 18 December 1880.

In addition to capriccio Italian, the program will feature other important orchestral pieces, performed by the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra. Such pieces include 'Alborado

Gracioso' by Maurice Ravel; Suite Op. 65 by the Turkish composer Adnan Saygun, noted for its occidantal rhythms and tunes, and the winner piece of the Mediterranean 'Youth' Orchestra bi-annual composition competition, composed by Paldeera. The program also includes Benjamin Britten's 'Youth Person's Guide to the Orchestra'. Britten, the leading English composer of our time, wrote 'The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra', Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Henry Purcell, in 1946 for a film entitled instruments of the orchestra, produced by the British Ministry of Education.

The peace had its first concert performance in Liverpool on 15 October 1946, by Sir Malcolm Sargent and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The purpose of the composition and the film was to introduce the instruments of the orchestra to young persons of all ages.

It is worth mentioning that the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra is formed anew each year whereby the supervisors of the Orchestra tour certain countries on the Mediterranean to audition young musicians and choose the best to become members of the Orchestra for one year. As of next year, the Orchestra will include young musicians from Jordan. These musicians will be mostly students from the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

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WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 1997

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Lifting ban on dairy products imports causes local protest

Continued from page 1

Press reports suggest that there is a dispute between the European Union and Britain about some farms in the UK exporting cow meat suspected of carrying the virus, to third parties in Europe, and then changing the name of the country of origin. By these forged certificates the meat is exported to many countries, including developing ones.

The Health Ministry's decision makes the import of milk products conditional on a country of origin certificate confirming that the milk used in these products is free from "mad cow" disease.

But this is the core of the dispute. Those who oppose the

lifting of the ban, stress that there were recent cases of "mad cow" disease reported in Britain and since there is no final resolution by the World Health Organization (WHO), the decision should be reviewed and even cancelled.

Malhas and Obeidat pointed out that the Egyptian authorities have two weeks ago detained a shipment of 700 tons of British beef suspected of contamination. This came from Belgium to Egypt with an endorsed certificate showing that the country of origin is France.

Obeidat is amazed that officials do not realize this fact. He is appealing to the authorities to help dairy producers by drawing up an agricultural and indus-

trial strategy to protect local industry.

Dairy producers suffer annual losses estimated at JD 20 million, according to Omar Al Horani, deputy director of the Danish Dairy Co. He said the decision will increase competition and leave a negative effect on the industry.

With the surplus in output and the expected rise in imports, farmers will be the victims. Dairy factories will be forced to reduce the quantity of milk they buy from those farmers.

In addition, the dairy manufacturing costs in Jordan are so high as the government makes it a condition for producers to use fresh milk in the processing

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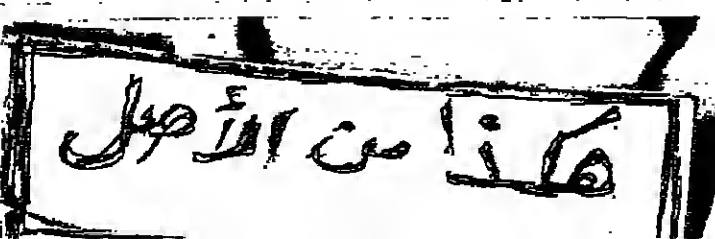
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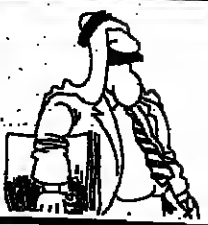
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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar



Student demo

A large demo of more than 1500 students took place in the University of Jordan, Sunday, just one day after the verdict of Ahmed Al Dakamseh. Organized by the Student Council, it was held to commemorate the birth of Prophet Mohammad. However, it soon turned into a protest against Israeli practices on the West Bank and in support of Al Dakamseh, the Jordanian soldier who has been given a life sentence with hard labor for shooting seven Israeli girls. The demonstrators were particularly angry with the latest actions and the posters issue in Hebron that was against Prophet Mohammad. Last Tuesday another demonstration took place in Ebdar, the hometown of Al Dakamseh. More than 100 women and children took part. The march began outside Dakamseh's home in the morning and continued beyond the village. They chanted praise to His Majesty King Hussein and called on the government to free Dakamseh. Security forces tried to persuade demonstrators to return to the village but in the end were dispersed through the use of tear gas according to press reports.

Tawjihi results, Friday

The results of the Tawjihi exams will be announced tomorrow Friday 25 July according to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Dr Izzat Jaradat. On the other hand, the Council of Higher Education has decided to accept 10,000 students into public universities and 11,000 in community colleges. Sources in the Ministry of Education expect the Tawjihi success rate to be about 45 percent.

Israeli pilots train in Jordan

Israeli air force pilots are presently on special training in Jordan on Boeing 707 transportation planes simulators. According to Israeli sources an agreement has been reached between Israel and Jordan to train Israeli pilots. According to the Israeli daily Haaretz, Royal Jordanian offered a much better deal for training on these simulators than the "European counterparts" whose cost proved too prohibitive.

Drowning

More than 40 people drowned in the King Abdallah canal so far this year. The figure is likely to go up even further if drastic action is not taken to ensure public safety. The figure for 1996 was 120. Most of these were teenagers.

Diabetics

The number of diabetics in this country forms 35 percent of the population. This is according to Dr Kamel Al Ajlouni of the National Center of Diabetes. He points out that this is within the regional average, but is much higher than the number of sufferers in the developed world. Dr Ajlouni added that only 15 percent of the below 25 age groups have diabetes, while its 40 percent for the above 40 age-groups.

Journalist threatens to shoot himself

A journalist threatened to shoot himself if he wasn't reinstated in his job. The journalist was given a job in one of the newspapers, but was soon fired. According to Al Haddath weekly the journalist had already quit his old job to move on to the new one but later found himself on the streets. His threat is taken seriously and the management is considering his reinstatement.

Newspapers in line

Newspapers are scrambling over each other to meet the stiff requirements of the new Press and Publications Law which has to be implemented by the 15 August deadline. All weeklies seemed to be in intense negotiations to find investors to be able to hike up their capital to JD 300,000. Al Bilad, Al Haadith, Al Mithaq, and Al Majd are already in line for the race. So far it would appear that only Al Bilad and Al Mithaq have put their house in order, and attracting outside investors. As from 1 August for instance, Al Bilad is to have a new chief editor. The famous Bassem Sakejha is to move from his present editorial post in Ad Dustour to his new one at the weekly. Sakejha is a veteran journalist, but it will take a while to see what changes, if any, he would make to the weekly. Al Majd however, is still limping. It has already managed to attract JD 30,000, but this is clearly not enough. Its chief editor, Fahd Al Rimawi is on record of stating that his weekly may well fold up if more investors don't come in. But this is only the beginning of the story. The Jordan press scene is in for a major reshuffle, it could be slow, and less painful, but it will happen, press watchers argue. Already the short-lived weekly, Al Hayat, has folded. Its offices are being sold off to interested buyers.

Air flights

Direct connection flights have started between Jordan and Gaza. The first Palestinian National Airways flight has landed into Queen Alia International Airport, yesterday, Wednesday. There will be two flights a week between Al Arish, Egypt and Amman. The second flight is to be every Sunday. The Jordanian Royal Wings is still awaiting approval from the Civil Aviation Authority to fly between the two destinations. As soon as that comes through, it can start direct connection.

Jewish settler runs over little girl

An Israeli Jewish settler, ran over a child crossing the street near Jerash. Mochi Mendelson, was driving a tourist vehicle with members of the "Keshet" settlement in the Golan Heights. Mendelson's mother said that her son's car was standing at the side of the road and so the child was out of sight. The 23-year-old Israeli driver was arrested by Jordanian police, to protect his life amidst local anger. Mendelson's parents sent a letter to the Jordanian government requesting it to hand over their son to the Israeli embassy in Jordan. The lawyer assigned by the embassy called Mendelson's father to reassure him of the measures he is taking, according to Israeli daily Ma'ariv.



His Majesty King Hussein speaks at the 11th Conference of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research, Al Al Beit Foundation, Tuesday. He said that the Islamic world still lacks a defined, practical and scientific guide to solve social problems that are increasing because of new developments. Such a plan, he added, should be based on fundamental factors mainly, the Islamic religion and Arab culture. Attending the meeting was HRH Crown Prince Hassan.

Ambassador Omar Rifai 'Jordan will continue to support any initiative to move peace process once again'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr Omar Rifai is Jordan's second ambassador to Israel since the two countries signed a peace treaty in October 1994. Mr Rifai received his BA from Harvard University in Government and his Master degree in political science from Georgetown University. He served as a diplomat in several Jordanian embassies before working closely with the Jordanian negotiating team to the peace talks. In April 1995 he became coordinator of the Middle East peace process at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was assigned as Jordan's ambassador to Israel in February 1996, to replace Dr Marwan Moasher. Mr Rifai talked to The Star's Khaled Al Abed recently about Jordanian-Israeli relations and the peace process. Excerpts follow.



Rifai

Human rights organizations claim that there are tens of thousands of prisoners in Israeli jails. Do you have any figure in that regard?

The present number of Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails is about 19. The number was higher but we have been working over the past couple of years to release many of them and we have succeeded in that. It is a lengthy process, negotiations are intense with the Israeli authorities to release the remaining 19 prisoners. Regarding the absentee property, is there any movement in that regard? This is again one of the issues that we are following intensively with the Israeli government. Improvement is slow but our efforts are continuing till we find a solution which is beneficial to Jordanian interest in that area.

How do you characterize Jordanian-Israeli relations in light of the on-going stalemate in the peace process?

Jordanian-Israeli relations are affected by two factors: The first factor is the bilateral relationship between Jordan and Israel directly, and the second factor is the regional relationship in light of a comprehensive settlement. Presently, if there is a problem on the regional level, the political level, [and I mean] the Palestinian-Israeli problem, it will definitely affect the Jordanian-Israeli relationship. Also, Jordanian-Israeli bilateral issues determine the nature and scope of this relationship.

You are on record stating that there was a bit of a stale about the harsh Israeli treatment of Jordanian diplomats when they cross the bridge into Jordan. Has the issue been resolved?

The issue was raised on the highest levels in the Israeli government; about the treatment of Jordanian diplomats, Jordanian embassy personnel and indeed all Jordanians at Israeli border points. The issue is being taken seriously by the Israeli authorities. They have promised us to do what they can to make it better and to resolve the situation. And we will keep after it until it is fully resolved.

What about the peace issue? Can Jordan do more to reactivate the peace process particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track? What about the Egyptian initiative to restart the peace process? Is Jordan currently involved in an initiative of its own?

Jordan always supports any initiative to reactivate and restart the peace process. The present Egyptian initiative is not moving as fast as we had hoped or expected. I think the main problem relating to the Egyptian initiative is the Israeli government's intransigence on various issues. Jordan will continue to support any initiative to move the peace process once again. The hope is that the Israeli government will change its attitude and start reacting more positively to these initiatives. Presently, Jordan is not undertaking any initiative by itself but supports any party that wants to reactivate the process.

There are still obstacles regarding the Jordan-Israeli trade agreement and other issues such as Aqaba airport. What is the latest update in that respect?

There are a number of bilateral agreements between Jordan and Israel which we are in the process of trying to finalize and implement. Among these is the Aqaba-Eilat airport that we are continuing negotiations on. There is progress but we have not reached a final conclusion. Hopefully it will be solved soon.

Trade is another area where we are still negotiating with the Israeli side to implement an agreement and to open Palestinian markets to Jordanian products, and this is also something that we are working hard on, but we have not reached a final solution. And in all agreements, all of them need to be implemented before we start seeing results.

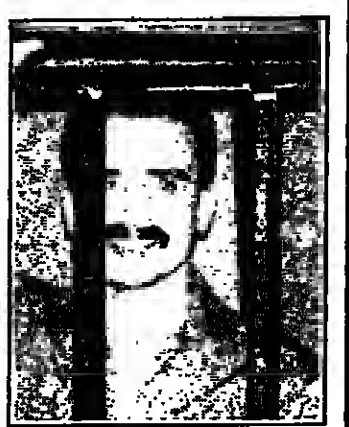
How do you respond to Israeli claims that there are 15,000 Jordanians working illegally in Israel? Is this a true figure and what are you doing about it?

Well, there are many Jordanians who cross into Israel on tourist visas and stay there afterwards, illegally, working for as long as they can until they are found and sent home. This is really an issue which has become quite hot lately. I think the number is between 12,000 and 14,000 Jordanians who are in Israel illegally. It's an issue we are trying to solve, but as in the case of all illegal foreign workers in any country, it's an issue which is hard to discover, because people cross over and tend to get lost in big cities, and it's a question of time before they are found and sent home again.

Dakamseh's case continues to be a hot potato

By a Star Staff Writer

NAOUR— Contrary to expectations, the military court sentenced Jordanian soldier Ahmed Al Dakamseh to life imprisonment with hard labor for shooting dead seven Israeli schoolgirls on the borderland of Baqoura last March. The verdict shocked the defence committee, which expected a 10 to 15 year sentence after the court agreed that Dakamseh's crime is not premeditated. And since most experts confirmed that he suffers from a psychological illness which made him unaccountable for his actions as a result of diminished responsibility. "If the crime is not premeditated, the sentence should have ranged between 15 to life imprisonment," said Mr Ahmad Obiedat, member of the 92-person defence committee of Dakamseh. "In the case of a multi-victim crime, life imprisonment is the usual sentence, but in Dakamseh's case, the court passed a life sentence without taking the mental state of the defendant into consideration." Obiedat who is also a former prime minister, told reporters outside the courtroom.



The five-judge military tribunal decided that Cpl. Dakamseh, 26, was guilty of murder but ruled out a premeditated accusation, which could have brought a death sentence. In turn, the court handed down a life sentence because he has anti-social personality disorder. "His psychological state did not make it possible for the defendant to maintain composure, prior planning or even self-control, thus premeditation was not there," said the head of the tribunal Brig. Ma'amoun Al Khasawneh. "He knew what he was doing when he shot the girls, but his personal disorder made him act impulsively regardless of the consequences."

During the 90-minute court session, Dakamseh, was often reading from the holy Koran. He was calm when his sentence, the maximum punishment for murder, was read out. Dakamseh has no right to appeal. However, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdel Hafiz Marai Ka'abneh has the right to either approve the verdict against Dakamseh, acquit him or call for a retrial. In an attempt to reduce the sentence, head of Dakamseh's defence committee, Mr Hussein Mjalli sent a memo in Al Ka'abneh demanding a lesser sentence or withdraw the verdict. According to Mjalli, Article (8) of the Military Penal Code states that any verdict by the Military court would not be executed unless it is passed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or his authorized official. And the Chairman has the right to either pass the verdict, cancel it, release the accused, order retrial, reduce sentence or not to implement the verdict.

Mjalli appealed to Al Ka'abneh to use his authority in that regard. He said in his memo "I appealed to you to order your just and legal decision to cancel the verdict against my client and order his release or reduce the sentence or cease the execution of verdict."

The tribunal also found Dakamseh guilty on three charges of intent to kill, threatening to kill and military disobedience, for which he was sentenced to a total of 14 years, to run concurrently with the life sentence.

Continued on page 2



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Our Say...

A new US policy is needed

THIS WEEK'S breakthrough in Brussels in the political deadlock crippling talks between the Palestinians and Israelis is a modest but important achievement for the European Union. The meeting between President Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy had reportedly succeeded in relaunching bilateral peace negotiations, stuck ever since the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu began construction work of a Jewish settlement on occupied Arab lands in East Jerusalem.

It is early to put too much hope on the Brussels meeting. The Israeli government has lost credibility and the only way, hope can be restored is by seeing concrete steps taken by Tel Aviv to put the peace process back on track.

It is a modest triumph for the Europeans, because under different circumstances the results would have been much more encouraging. Europe has been trying, fruitlessly, to find a role for itself in the Middle East peace process since the Madrid peace conference in 1991. Their efforts have been circumscribed by US and Israeli objections and political Arab incapacity. The absence of Europe from effective participation in the negotiation process that followed Madrid is probably the cause of a one-sided, imbalanced and impotent political process.

Even when European mediation, such as that of Norway, succeeded in bringing out the controversial Oslo accords between the Palestinians and the Israelis, US monopoly over the peace process and its obvious bias in favor of Israel has left these accords, and its signatories, in limbo.

Netanyahu's intransigence has dealt a deadly blow to the peace process. But his extremism could have been checked if the US had intervened as an honest broker in the talks. Instead, it turned a blind eye to Netanyahu's destructive settlement policies which brought the process to a halt.

For the past few months, the Americans have been unwilling to bring pressure on the Israeli government, preferring instead to squeeze more concession from the Palestinians. When this short-sighted policy did not work out, the Americans turned their backs on the region and focused their attention on other issues but not without putting their veto power in the UN at Israel's disposal.

Leaving the parties to cook in their own sauce has not proven to be a wise policy. Israel's settlement policy has not been shaken and Netanyahu's intransigence has not been watered down in spite of his growing isolation. The Palestinians, on the other hand, feel abandoned with no party to turn to in order to force Israel to honor its commitments under the peace agreements.

Europe's concern for the region's affairs is part and parcel of its own national security and interests. Its mediation efforts, while appreciated, will not bring about the needed change in the peace process unless the Americans review their policy towards the current Israeli government. The Brussels meeting was a modest gesture, but without renewed American intervention, the process will soon be bogged down again.

During his visit to Ramallah, Sunday, Prime Minister Majali expressed Jordan's full support for the Palestinian people and leadership. Dr Majali met PNA President Yasser Arafat and conveyed to him His Majesty King Hussein's and HRH Crown Prince Hassan's wishes for the creation of a Palestinian state on Palestinian land. Mr Arafat said that Al Majali's visit was productive and important. Arafat added that an agreement was drawn up regarding Jordanian and Palestinian economic matters. The agreement confirmed the meeting of the Jordanian-Palestinian economic committee that is due to be held in Amman next week.

President Arafat also told Dr Majali that he would be visiting Jordan shortly to meet with His Majesty the King.



President Ezer Weizman says Israel has no alternative but to talk to the Palestinians

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr Ezer Weizman is the President of Israel. A Labor politician of many years, he held numerous portfolios in many previous Israeli governments. Mr Weizman also served in the Israeli army. He talked to Ghanem Nuseibeh recently about peace prospects and relations with the Palestinian leadership. Excerpts follow:

What would you say about the peace process, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track?

There are many things I would like to see different. I would like to see the peace process progressing faster. Last time I met Chairman Arafat I told him he has to be patient, although I know that both sides have to be. He has achieved more than any Palestinian leader in the past. He is in control of two and a half million Palestinians with control of most of Gaza and the cities of Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Nablus Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho and this is only the beginning: by 1999 we have to finalize the agreement between us.

Your government does not seem to be doing much to advance the peace process?

I would not say she is not doing much, she might not be doing what some people would like. We live in a democratic process. I would like you to remember one thing, I am not counterattacking this question...the Palestinians are suffering now for not having accepted the partition plan of 1947. Had the Palestinian leadership accepted the partition of Palestine which our then pre-statehood authorities agreed to, it would have resulted in the creation of a Jewish state and an Arab state. Both sides have to take it easy now and to realize that we will not get 100 percent, the Palestinians will not get 100 percent. This is now the discussion. What percentage of Palestine, or Eretz Yisrael as we call it, will be ours, and what will be Palestine's.

Yes? Look if I didn't trust him completely. I wouldn't talk to him and I would say I don't want to talk to him. I have invited him to my private home and I went to see him in Gaza.

You have condemned the Hebron posters, but what are your views about removing the settlements in Hebron to ease this tension?

This is what is known in good Imperial College English as a hot potato. Abraham and Isaac are buried there, which is a mosque and a synagogue together. By the way, I hope one day Islam and Judaism will get closer together because there is much more closeness between Islam and Judaism than with Christianity. We have to be hopeful that the Jewish community in Hebron and the Arab community in Hebron will be an example on how to live together.

As an Israeli leader, which of the Arab leaders in your opinion is best for his people as far as peace with Israel is concerned?

I am biased because I know the Egyptians. Come December this year, it would be 20 years since I've known President Mubarak. I met him when I first visited Egypt I was the first minister to visit Egypt in '77, a month after the visit of Sadat...I am sure he [Mubarak] wants peace, but he also inher-

ited an agreement which his predecessor signed. The Egyptian pushed, for the first time, for a written agreement about the Palestinian problem, because Sadat said: "This is not a bilateral agreement, this is a framework and we shall sign an agreement with you, conditional to solving the Palestinian problem and with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon."

On the other hand, King Hussein is a very respectable man, I know him now, I didn't know him before, and he seems to be a very stout leader, and it is a pleasure to be in his presence. Last time I saw him, he flew a helicopter and I was sitting in it and I watched him fly through Jordan, but the main side is the Palestinian and the only one to talk to now is Arafat because he was democratically elected and Inshallah we will one day talk to Assad.

Do you trust Arafat?

The question of trusting someone is like: do you trust your own wife? Does the wife trust her own husband? Trust is a very flexible thing, I have no alternative. I have to take risks and he does that for his people. We have to find a solution that will give him the best possibility to act in such a way that I trust him. It is a bit of a philosophical answer.

I'll take it as a yes?

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EZER WEIZMAN, Israel's President turned hawk

complete five years, with the option to run for five more. Presently my decision is to run for five more, I can only run for two terms, and when I finish I will be 79. I am still thinking whether to do it. I will definitely finish my five years. I finished my political life when I resigned from the Knesset in 1991.

What is your message to our Arab and Muslim members and your message to our Jewish members?

First of all to the Muslim members, I am very sorry and I apologize for this terrible, stupid and uncivilized crime too, which puts the Prophet Muhammad, who I said is much closer to Judaism than many others, in such a terrible way which is anti-Jewish too. And I hope that one day we will really settle down. It's not an easy thing, because after so many years, a 100 years is not a long period. And that we eventually find the common aspects of Judaism and Islam and of course Christianity, but I say Islam because there is a majority of Muslims in our part of the world, and I've said it and I repeat it that there is much closeness between Islam and Judaism, and that we will understand that not only because it sounds good that we have to live together, but it is also the Jewish and Islamic heritage and history that brought us together. There are a lot of differences, and we will be able to live together for the benefit of this area, Islam is a great movement with over a billion Muslims all over the world to only 13 million Jews.

Are you in your final days of your political career?

First of all, the presidency is not a political issue. I try to keep as much as possible out of politics. I am now in my fifth year. Next May I will

leave and come to Israel... Oh that's for sure I think all of them should come and live here. You see one of the questions I always ask my friends, I have a lot of friends, especially in England, what do you think the future of Jewry is, if only for one aspect is intermarriage? The fact is that Jewry does not expand. We were 12 million in the beginning of the Second World War, we lost half and we are only back to 13. So intermarriage to keep Jewry can be better kept in Israel than, for instance, in Manchester [city in UK].

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High-level friendship forged in world war

Forged in War: Churchill, Roosevelt and the Second World War, by Warren Kimball, HarperCollins £25, 422 pages. Reviewed by Angus Calder

AT THE outset of his valuable and entertaining book, Warren Kimball quotes Chief of Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke's description of Churchill "working" with him till nearly 3 am, with the gramophone turned on, skipping about the room "with a sandwich in one hand and water-recess in the other." What on earth kept such Great Leaders going?

When Churchill was in his 70s, and Roosevelt in his wheelchair, they met in Tehran in 1943. Roosevelt had travelled nearly 9,000 miles, hideously uncomfortable in aircraft, through dangerous skies. Churchill arrived with a cold and a cough and was seriously ill with pneumonia on his way home, convalescing for two weeks in Almaty. Kimball draws attention constantly to the health and comfort factors in diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Churchill was a day-long drinker, and Roosevelt smoked cigarettes heavily on top of his paralysis, caused by polio and chronic bleeding haemorrhoids. Yet Kimball thinks that the views held steady. Each kept consistently fighting

his end. Churchill was determined to preserve a Great Power role for his Empire, which centred on India (and depended on the Indian Army for coherence). FDR was always possessed by the counterdrive to sort the world out for free-market capitalism. They could not disguise their differences. But they did contrive to joke with each other about them and so, in some sense, could be called "friends".

Both men, however, were gifted actors and wordsmiths capable of feigning friendship. Kimball sees Roosevelt as an arch "seducer", who flew so far to Tehran because he wanted to meet, and charm, Stalin. Churchill was chronically disingenuous in his efforts to shift the thrust of the joint war effort away from frontal assault on Europe, as happened on D-Day, towards defence of imperial interests in the Mediterranean. Like great sportsmen playing on when hamstringing, and octagonal conductors somehow standing through hour-long symphonies, these unhealthy, old men seem to typify how obsession with power can drive people on far beyond normal limits.

Kimball, editor of three volumes of Churchill-Roosevelt correspondence and author of several books on closely related subjects, has had to acquire the

geopolitical vision of his protagonists, for whom an episode in the Don basin or Madagascar might be of relevance to what could happen in Norway or New Guinea.

His narrative most usefully links together worldwide simultaneous events normally treated well apart. Both FDR and Churchill the latter, in particular, had an impressive grasp of world geography, one of several reasons why we might call them "great".

Do great men determine history? Images of "Roosevelt" alone seeing off the "Isolationists" who didn't want America drawn into war while "Churchill" personally kept the Nazis at bay, typify a stop-cartoon notion of history which just cannot be right. So does the idea, much touted in wartime propaganda, that Hitler wanted to make himself World Dictator. But large forces, however crudely, are thus represented.

Influential far beyond the red bits on the map, today the US exercises even fuller world hegemony. In between, Germany's bid for similar authority not implying swastikas in Swaziland and jackboots on Java was halted and battered down.

To this result, the US brought far and away the greatest industrial capacity, pouring tanks and aircraft off Fordite assembly-lines. The Soviet Union provid-

ed the overwhelming numbers of male (and female) soldiers needed to defeat the Germans on the front which mattered most to Hitler. What did Britain contribute? In Kimball's view, Britain won "the first and indispensable victory of the second world war" by refusing to surrender in 1940-41, thus "making it possible for others to win the war".

"If I die," Churchill told his daughter in Marrakech, "don't worry, the war is won." But if he had died in late 1940...? Any consequent collapse of the will to fight in the British governing class might well have brought the US into the war faster. In global struggle, Germany and Japan were bound to lose the diplomatic dealings of Churchill and Roosevelt merely infected and nuanced that bigger story. But their individual personalities may be said to have determined at least in part, the atmosphere in which we have lived ourselves.

Their "friendship" helped to ensure that the alliance against Hitler was firm and cordial and that the subsequent triumph of US capitalism did not leave a legacy of bitterness among the British.

Financial Times Syndication

Middle East Beat by Khair Jabbour

Parliamentary elections

ELECTIONS HAS assumed crucial importance that it is used today interchangeably with what we commonly call democracy. Although going to the polls is just one aspect of democracy, it is a vital characteristic. Parliamentary elections have come to symbolize the political sovereignty of the people. And the extent of struggle in the world's history to reach this stage of political representation is far reaching.

This democratic right is earned, and its basis is the notion of political maturity and social responsibility. Such attributes, are no longer the monopoly of the developed world; they are part of the international value-system of civilization. Even the radical, which always suspected democracy—have thrown the gun away and opted for the ballot box as the only realistic option for political participation in the affairs of their communities.

Jordan is no different from any other country that has gone through the democratic transition, and finally reached the stage of institutional, political democratic practice with all shades of opinions, undertaking parliamentary participation in the affairs of the country.

Political democracy is practiced without any discrimination to any political force that upholds the Constitution. This is not dissimilar to the attitudes of older democracies, who respect the opinion of the majority, and protect the democratic rights of the minority, while at the same time deny the right to any organization that threatens, with the use of force, to overthrow the system.

In Jordan, all political views compete under the parliamentary dome, according to their merit and size of their popularity. But suddenly, we started seeing members of what we can term as opposition parties, holding their meetings in fraternal countries, as if they are not tolerated in Jordan. The joke is that most of their co-ideologists in the same fraternal countries, do not have the right to public assembly.

One cannot help but feel that opposition parties, seem to long for the days of suppression, and almost have a guilt complex about being free to express their opinions and hold public meetings. Has the glitter gone out finally? And can't there be an opposition without the need for suppression? It is hard to understand such an attitude that demands an apology from the government that is acting democratically, and upholding the principles of public assembly and freedom of convictions.

Before the elections campaign even started, we have been hearing debates within some of the opposition groups, that they will not participate in the coming elections. The reason for that seems to be the premonition that the elections' results will be fraudulent and, there is no point in participating unless international observers are called in.

It is hard to accept that the honourable oppositionists do not look around and see the extent of our country's gains from the democratic experience. And to judge, the results beforehand, is an extreme case of paranoia, which the trust and cooperation among the three powers in the country should have eliminated by now. Indeed, the hardest is to conquer the things that we thought that we conquered. Our brothers in the region, look with envy to the political participation of the Jordanian people in running their own country.

While those who pretend to have its best interest at heart, not only wish to slay the experience, but also throw doubt on our gains. Hot-heads should cool down and oppositionists or otherwise, will take their rightful place in enriching the democratic experience. As for calling on international observers to monitor the elections, it seems it was done in the best of the moment, for so Jordanian will accept to compromise the sovereignty of our country, and most certainly not, a potential Jordanian legislator.

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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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مكتبة الشهاب

JULY 1997
Middle East Beat
by
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24 JULY 1997

B U S I N E S S

THE STAR 5

Business scene

On the occasion of His Majesty's Ascension to the Throne, the first exhibition in the Middle East for Plastic and Rubber Industries will open on 3 August. Mr Yacoub bari Hattil, general manager of the Zaitoun and Partners Est., the organizer of the event, said that a large number of Jordanian companies will be participating. This is in addition to companies from Saudi Arabia and Russia. He added that there is a possibility that Kuwait will also take part in this event. During the exhibition the Investment Promotion Corp. will present programs for investment in Jordan to businessmen who will be meeting in this exhibition to discuss the possibilities for mutual cooperation.

The UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee approved new Jordanian export contracts valued at \$1.1 million to Iraq. The new contracts cover pharmaceuticals at \$777,000, industrial equipments at \$341,000, and commercial materials at \$59,000. With these the total of the approved contracts of the Jordanian firms reaches about \$6,765,385. The new contracts have resulted from the efforts made by Jordan's Permanent Mission in UN, in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Jordan's exports increased by 6.5% in the first three months of this year compared with the same period in 1996. This is according to a report on Jordan's external trade by the Ministry of Planning. These exports were estimated at JD 226.6 million compared with JD 212.8 million over the first three months of last year. The report shows that Arab markets took 44 percent of these exports at a value of JD 93 million. Iraq and Saudi Arabia are the major importers, while India and Israel took JD 23 million of total exports. Exports to the Palestine National Authority during this period, increased by 125 percent to reach JD 1.8 million.

However, Jordan's imports have also increased by 2.1% compared with the same time of last year. The value of imports reached JD 671 million, whereas last year they totalled JD 357 million. The most important Jordanian imports are crude oil and raw materials at JD 90 million. The report also says that the opening of the Gulf markets helped to increase the exports of consumer's commodities by 35.3%. Moreover, it shows that the deficit in the trade balance is JD 390.7 million in comparison with JD 385.8 for the same period of 1996.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 23 July

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
British Pound	1.1510	1.1568
Japanese Yen	0.4124	0.4145
Swiss Franc	0.4801	0.4825
German Mark	0.1227	0.1233
French Franc	0.5624	0.5652
Italian Lira	0.3667	0.3685
Spanish Peseta	0.0419	0.0421

Jordan expected to see touristic hype soon

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

AT LAST summer has truly begun. Tourists are flocking into the country—Jordanian expatriates as well as Arab and foreign tourists are arriving daily in their thousands.

The tourism sector in Jordan can be divided into two: a desire by tourists to see the rich archaeological sites, of which there are a great many and medical treatment for various ailments, particularly skin diseases.

Both archaeological and therapeutic tourists demand a high quality service, attractive sites and of course at a reasonable cost.

Many hotels have been built after the signing of the peace treaty with Israel in the hope of the expected influx of visitors to Jordan.

Last year revenues from tourism were estimated at \$700 million. However, today, and up till now the tourism flows have been badly affected by setbacks in the peace process and the relative stability in the region.

But the Ministry of Tourism is adamant. It's going on with its infrastructure rehabilitation and improvement in the performance of touristic agencies, hotels, transport vehicles, services, restaurants and all entertainment centers.

Despite the setback, Minister of Tourism Aqel Baltaji, expects the number of tourists to increase by 25 percent.

According to Baltaji, tourist arrivals until the end of June this year reached about 467,525, 52,887 of whom came from the USA, 132,705 from Europe and 21,999 from other countries.



Also 202,464 tourists came from the Gulf and 57,470 from Israel.

However, some observers point out that those who are coming from the Gulf or Israel cannot be considered 'tourists,' as most of them have primarily come to see their families who already own properties in Jordan. This is to say that they are not using restaurants or hotels to be labelled as tourists who help to enhance touristic revenues or income.

Some of them do visit historical and archaeological sites, but they are few. Israeli tourists also do not bring to our treasury that much, they mainly come to visit Petra

via Aqaba and don't stay in the hotel for more than a day.

The Tourism Ministry is planning to expand the number of hotel rooms to 11,108, this year. The current number is only about 5,286, but some touristic agencies see no need for this.

They put the blame of the decline in the number of tourists arriving at Jordan on the high cost of spending one night or more at these hotels.

But, the director of the Jordan's Hotels Association Fakhri Tawal does not agree. He told *The Star* that "the pricing of hotels' fares is fixed by the Ministry of Tourism and our Association. Hotels are allowed to offer 50 per-

cent discount for Jordanians, certain companies or permanent clients." Tawal added that the average fare of one room in one night in a deluxe Five Star hotel is JD 100 in Amman, and JD 70 in a Four Star hotel in Aqaba, this is without discount, so whoever says that the fare is very high must be mistaken. But Tawal clarified that the demand on a certain hotel in a special season or occasion could cause a higher fare.

What is more exciting is that more and more tourists are expected next season. Chairman of the Jordan Hotels Association Michel Nazzal says "Hotels' bookings over the next six months

are attractive and promising. They are up by 10 percent compared with the same time last year. This means that we have to expect more tourists and higher revenues". Nazzal said.

He attributed these positive developments to the efforts made by the Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the Jordan's Hotels Association, the private sector and the Royal Jordanian to promote this country as a touristic market.

Tawal shares Nazzal's view that tourism will see a remarkable hype soon, unless affected by political developments due to the deadlock in the peace process. Jordan is sensitive toward political events in the region, mainly in the Palestinian territories and Israel as any event will be automatically reflected on the visitors coming to the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Tourism is planning to expand tourism marketing programs by spending JD400,000 to enable touristic organizations to market Jordan tourism internationally. Certainly the climate of peace and stability in the region as well as the attractive "therapeutic tourism" in the Dead Sea and other hot spas help to promote the number of tourist arrivals to Jordan.

Brass exploitation raises deep environmental questions

AMMAN (Star)—The full exploitation of the mineral resources potential in Jordan is given much concern by the government. It is inviting local and foreign private sectors to play a more active role in this process.

Oil exploration contracts have recently been awarded to foreign companies, and in addition to that, there are drilling operations currently being carried out by international oil firm "Shell" to exploit shale oil in Jordan.

However, attempts to exploit raw brass for commercial reasons is confronted by much protest.

Today, the proposed drilling project for brass in Dana is not moving forward. Indeed, it is being hindered by a dispute between the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN).

The two sides differ on the economic benefits and revenues of the project and its impact on the environment.

Dana hill, is one of six major natural reserves organized in 1993 in an area rich of rare animals and plants.

NRA Director General Khaled Al Shayab stresses that the project causes no environmental damage, adding that it is merely a preparatory process to explore the brass potential and its economic feasibility.

There are proven brass reserves in Wadi Araba, and since the Dana reserve is situ-

ated in the valley, then it would have to be looked into, Al Shayab says.

He assures that such a process will be carried out in a well thought out exploration program without harming the environment.

The proven brass reserve in the area close to Dana is about 20 million tons, while according to expectations, there is an additional reserve of 35 million tons. Such potential is promising and the excavations will determine its economic value.

The government has already approved the excavations, taking into consideration the aforementioned figures, says Al Shayab.

However, the position of the RSPN is completely the opposite.

RSPN President Anous Muashar points out that his society should be told about every project undertaken in the Dana reserve to avoid any damage to the environment.

He adds that if the brass exploitation project proves to be promising then the feasibility study must take into account the size of water the project needs to be fruitful and productive, thus hinting at the water shortage in Jordan. Not convinced with the official view he says that it could cause damage to the infrastructure and have negative impact on the future of the reserve as a touristic site.

The Dana reserve is considered to be the second major



Could there be a way out of this conundrum and still preserve the Dana reserve

tourist attraction after the city of Petra, which is 50 kilometers south.

Muashar points out that according to previous studies the brass exploitation project has not proved its beneficial economic value.

In turn, Al Shayab stresses that these studies were conducted in 1970s, when the value of the ton of brass at international markets did not exceed \$1000, whereas its price today is \$2315.

On the other hand, Al

Shayab seems to avoid any clash with the RSPN. He reiterates that "all what we look for now is to prove the potential of brass and this process carries no negative effects to the environment."

He says that the whole project can be suspended if no attractive results materialize.

The costs of the project are between \$50 to 75 million. This will be put up by the foreign company that may get the tender for the contract.

The NRA makes it a condi-

tion that the share of the local private sector should not be less than 50 percent of the project's capital.

Al Shayab says that such a project would bring additional income to the treasury (including mining fees production and income tax).

However, Muashar says that the environmental destruction resulting from the execution of this project is much more than the expected revenues. ■

Business Chronicle

Selling in installment: its benefits and risks

THINKING OF it as a solution to their problems, people went for the deep end. Some, including those who are unemployed, started to buy on hire purchase. Shop owners obliged, and hire purchase agreements drawn up. In England it is called

buying on "the never, never"—paying on installment basis does take ages.

Furniture, electric and electronic appliances, and even satellites are offered on what appears to be on easy payments.

Consumers, encouraged by shop vendors, rush to buy as much as they can, as long as they don't have to pay in cash or in advance.

Today, there are many shops that sell on installment; it has become a marketing phenomenon in the country. Newly wed couples are very attracted by the motto of "we are ready to provide clients with all they need, at attractive conditions."

They sign the hire purchase agreement and "delayed cheques" to the shop owners which in turn they have to present to the banks on a monthly basis.

The problem arises when these consumers find themselves at the end of the month unable to pay the installment, so they hold the payment, for the following month. After a while they find themselves in arrears.

This causes a problem for shop owners, who had bought their goods or imported them from outside, and have to meet their financial obligations to the exporters or the bank. This is really the main reason behind another phenomena: the bounced cheques, whose number is on the rise, and today is badly in need of a solution—but this is really a risk which vendors must run in such a kind of trade.

The situation—and it could reflect on the economic state of the country—have become so bad that the owners of these shops have become bankrupt after failing to reschedule their debts or find another outlet for such a case.

Ibrahim Al Khalili, an electric equipments importer, says that the issue of paying in installments should be handled carefully to avoid any mishaps. He stressed that vendors have to be careful in dealing with consumers. Importers and manufacturers have now realized the just of the problem and became more cautious.

The relation between sellers and buyers should be based on mutual confidence and benefit.

Consumers demand that dealers provide them with a high quality commodity at a reasonable price and at facilitated conditions. Vendors, in turn, request buyers to abide to their commitments and meet financial obligations in time.

However, many people say that prices in these shops are not low, they may be more than double those in other shops, but consumers claim that they have to buy from these shops because they don't have another option. Buying in installments is seen as necessary to solve people's financial problems, regardless whether these are high or low. But, do consumers mostly buy what they need on hire purchase?

Definitely not. What is amazing is that many people nowadays are even prepared to buy satellites on installments. Is this a pressing need, or merely to satisfy their desire to buy at any cost. Those people are drawn by the attractive ads in newspapers and on TV to buy a satellite dish at JD 17 per month. It was calculated the other day that, that people can switch on the TV, watch as many channels as they want at a daily cost of 57 piasters. Now people may rush out to buy, but when they become unable to pay by the end of the month, then they will certainly feel the crunch. ■

US Airways names sales, marketing vice president

ARLINGTON — Steven Tracas was named vice president of sales and marketing at US Airways.

Tracas, who comes to US Airways from American Airlines, will oversee the activities of the company's worldwide sales force. White, who comes from Brierley partners in Chicago, a marketing consulting firm, will become the company's vice president of marketing programs and services and will oversee US Airways' dividend miles program, the US Airways clubs and consumer affairs.

"We are extremely pleased that these two talented and experienced individuals will be joining us in these important positions," Wolf said.

Tracas and White will be based at US Airways' corporate headquarters in Arlington. Tracas began his airline career in 1978 as a customer service agent with American Airlines and has held a variety of important sales and marketing positions. In 1994, he became managing director, national accounts, at the Sabre Travel Information network in Dallas, and in 1995, he returned to American Airlines to serve as managing director, passenger sales, Western US.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Aeronautical, technological from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona.

White holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration, Finance from the University of Houston. ■

Major oil venue to be held in Saudi Arabia

THE IMPORTANCE of oil will be on top of the agenda in Saudi Arabia. The Second Saudi Arabian Gas Conference due to be held in Yanbu, in the eastern province between October 18-20.

The conference is the second in the series devoted to the use of gas in Saudi Arabia's power and industrial development. Convened as a country focus meeting of the powerful Middle East Infrastructure Development Congress (MEIDC), the conference is being staged in partnership with the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu.

Additional industry, banking and legal experts from five

nations—Italy, the UK, USA, Bahrain and Korea will join the speakers platform.

The conference will feature three in-depth sessions. The first will concentrate on "Integrated Gas, Power and Industrial Development", the second on "Gas Resource Development and Industrial Utilization" and the third on "Private Power and Infrastructure in Saudi Arabia."

All three will include the tried-and-tested MEIDC strategy of sector-by-sector roundtable discussions.

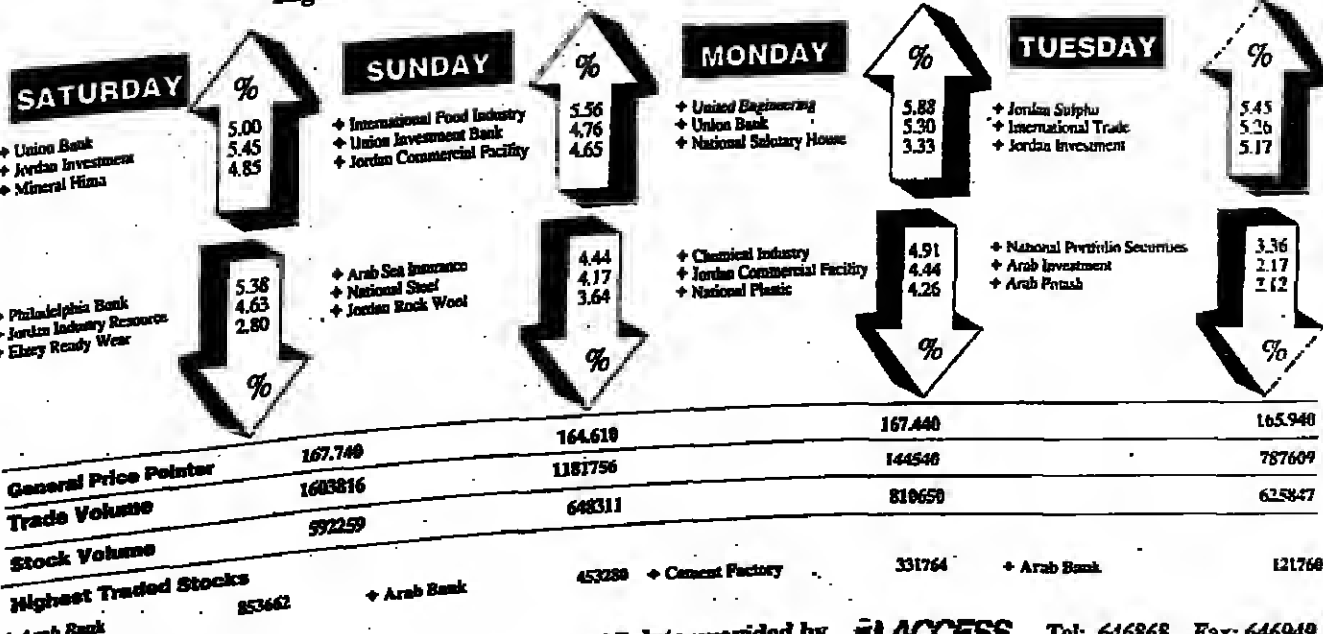
These allow Ministers, top government officials and private sector executives to meet and clarify their objectives and priorities for future infrastructure

power plants and industrial utilities," said Hawken. "The Ministerial presence together, leading Saudi industrialists and prominent figures from the Kingdom's petroleum and power sectors has enriched a number of international authorities to join the speakers panel—which will be one of the most inclusive and commanding ever seen at an event in this region."

While the key note conference theme is the integrated development of gas, power and industry in Saudi Arabia, special focus will be given to the ramifications of gas utilisation on furthering industrialisation in Jubail and Yanbu as well as private participation in the development of the Kingdom's gas transmission infrastructure.

The Star
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Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market





A Royal wedding

Her Royal Highness Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan was married to Mr Alaa' Bataineh in a Royal wedding ceremony last week. The ceremony was held in the gardens of Basman Palace, and a large number of guests attended. Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Al Hassan and Princess Sarvath, and Dr 'Aref Bataineh and his wife, welcomed the guests.



SCRAPBOOK

By Nahla Rifai
Smile therapy

AS THE poem turned song goes "Smile and the world will smile back, cry and you cry alone." It, indeed, does seem that smiling and positive thinking is a necessity of life in this day and age—that is, if you want to have a wholesome and happy life. The pressures of daily life are ever on the increase, and thus, to relieve and alleviate stress is a welcome step for all.

Some countries such as India and Japan, have introduced laughter classes to the public. Businessmen, working mothers, non-working mothers, ordinary people and employers and employees of many a sector have taken up these laughing sessions. You simply go there, laugh at anything and everything, come back home and presto you're relaxed!

It is scientifically proven, that smiling and laughing releases certain hormones in your body which increase your adrenalin levels. This makes your body more healthy as is the case with greater exercise that also leads to high adrenaline levels. Scientists even claim that artificially putting on a smile induces the same effect as the real thing!

So if you're feeling sad and blue, or are simply stressed-out, put on a smile and laugh your way through the day. It will definitely make you feel a whole lot better.

Smiling is definitely a necessity in the Middle East. With all the pressures that Arabs (and non-Arabs alike) who live in the region have to face, and who are constantly exposed to the strains of Arab politics, smiling would come as a welcome relief.

Maybe our government should consider introducing "laughing classes" to ease the minds of our troubled Jordanian citizens, as concerns social, economic and political life in Jordan. Something to think about, or dare we say, "laugh" about!!!

Women and nature are brought to life in Al Borno's paintings

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

Though pregnant, Hanan Al Borno is in a relaxed mood. Dressed in a multi-coloured maternity dress showing her fondness for brightness, she welcomes journalists, well-wishers and visitors at the Royal Cultural Center. At the moment, her paintings are hung on the vast space of the RCC; the paintings shine in their own footlights.

Through the use of oil and water colors, Al Borno is clearly creating an identity of her own among the seasoned painters. Although this is her first solo exhibition, she has participated in most of the group exhibitions held at the University of Jordan where she obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy.

Some of her works are still found in the University of Jordan, along with other private collections.

Al Borno's current exhibition features beautiful oil and water color paintings loaded with irony and humor. One could say that the exhibit centers on the different images of women and nature. Indeed, this is the most intriguing.

In one painting a woman is in a sitting position, reading and in another, there is a woman in a standing position holding a baby, which the artist says "represents hope and inspiration."



Her enchantment is confirmed by the another painting of a leafless tree which stands alone and solitary in the Autumn months and representing the very diversity of nature. The sheer expanse of the desert and plains is combined with the hard, grumbling rocks whose rise and

descent illustrate the beauty of nature. Al Borno travels often between the temporal and the spiritual worlds. Two of her paintings in superb manner bear Ayaas from the holy Koran in which she says "Allah is omnipresent in our life. He is the light and everything, without

him nothing is possible." The richness of colors and the stylish inscription are put together as a conclusion of reassuring faith.

The stylized form the women represent assume the importance of the paintings. She creates the impression that they represent womanhood, it could be herself or her mother but above all it is about courage and determination.

Al Borno, using only two dimensions and bringing out the similarities in the methods of drawing between the woman in the oil painting and the other in the water painting show a remarkable difference.

She paints women of intense serenity and composure dominating the picture where occasional details can be picked out from the confusing nature. However, viewers can clearly discern the likeness between the two.

She is also fascinated by the heritage around her. In one of the paintings in water colors, she illustrates a cluster of village huts knitted together to portray both simplicity and solidarity.

Another particularly clear example presents a modest urban dwelling with clothes carelessly hung on drying lines. The image projects poverty and the struggle in the slums.

In a style that artists illustrate as both metaphysical and spiritual, Al Borno touches on the universal themes of life. But the exhibition as a whole seems to be dominated by her Arab-Jordanian heritage and her inspiration as a woman. Other paintings serve only the artist and confirms her credentials in other media. The exhibition ends today, Thursday, at the RCC.

US donation for JRDP

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS Princess Ranya Al Abdullah and Mr. Lewis Lucke, Director of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jordan, signed an agreement on Sunday, 20 July, providing funds in the amount of \$105,358 to Jordan River Development Projects (JRDP).

The funds will be used to establish an innovative furniture production facility in Wadi Al-Yabis village, in Wadi Rayan, 90 kilometers north-west of Amman in the North Jordan Governorate. The project will allow the use of local raw materials like bamboo cane and banana leaves to produce furniture. The furniture producing facility will provide a significant number of employment opportunities to the residents of Wadi Rayan, especially to women.

The fund is provided under USAID's Private Sector Services Project (PSSP), an \$8 million program aimed at assisting and fostering the development and growth of private enterprise.

For more information, please contact Basel Sahin at the Press Office at 820101 ext. 2288.

Queen Noor opens Arab children festival

AMMAN (Star)—The 17th Arab Children conference was opened under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, last Saturday. The conference hosts delegations of children from 13 Arab countries.

The opening, which was held in the Roman amphitheater, included a musical piece called "Al Sawasnah". It won the silver prize in the Egyptian Arab Festival for its television and radio production, as well as for its performance.

Folklore music by the Jordanian Armed Forces band also played during the opening ceremony, in addition to the performance of the conference song "One Nation" by the participating children.

The conference, which is titled "Challenges and Ambitions of the Future Arab Generation" includes a varied and lively program. Its activities include intellectual seminars.

These introduce specialists in the field of media to discuss the role of journalism in promoting Arab culture, as well as understanding among cultures of the world in general. Conference organizers are hosting tours to cultural and archeological sites in Jordan.

Sar'h Al Shabed and the Shoman Foundation are but a few of the cultural sites that the children have already visited.

The participating Arab children expressed



their appreciation to the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, for its continued efforts regarding the conference. They also added that this conference symbolizes Jordan's wish to advance the cause of future Arab generations.

The children also met with Dr Omar Al Khalib in an open meeting concerning media

and journalism, and childhood matters. They were also enlightened about the facts and meanings behind the Great Arab Revolt of 1916.

The conference is indeed a unifying move for Arab children, and a step closer to a future harmonious Arab society.

The world we promised our kids to afford

Like deers in the forest we promised they'll be
As birds in the sky they'll be free
Like monkeys they'll jump here and there
To eat what they enjoy to eat, and do what they dare

As the lion is the king of the forest
They'll be rulers of themselves - it's the best
In their dreams let them swim like fishes
Till they are able to find the pearl of wishes
That was the world you promised them to get
You promised them sunrise but gave them the set

Full of pain, sadness and grief
So cruel it was, way out of belief
A dark room with nothing but walls and a door
On a lay children sleeping, covering the floor
At breakfast they had less than a crumb of bread

A spoon of rice for lunch and nothing before bed
Work was all they were able to do
No moment to play nor sing nor have fun, too
Bugs and insects kept them company, maybe
Also a mouse

That was what we saw in an orphanage house
Some of the kids were there 'cause their parents died
Others whose rich parents couldn't heal them
When they sighed

The ones who weren't sent there but stayed home
Were also miserable and always alone
Those treated well were mostly spoiled

Selfish, arrogant and quickly annoyed
Kids were abandoned with pain in their heart
For them hope was now miles apart
Sent to a world of loneliness and cruelty
Yet we still claim we felt pity
Nothing worse can be offered to them
We've cut the rope of happiness - the flower's stem

Love and care we promised our babies
But what they tasted was sour and bitter candies
Love and comfort we promised every kid
But punished them for everything they did
Love and happiness we promised all children
But hard work and grief was all what was given

Love and freedom we promised every teenager
But they were ignored and to us each was an utter stranger
Love and decent living we promised every young man
But we couldn't help but destroy his future plan

Children do fill each and every country
From the very near and far boundary
Children do fill each and every continent
With minds so brilliant and faces so radiant
Children also do fill this huge world
But when will their shout ever be heard

Noor Dawany is a 13-year-old at the Ahliah School for Girls

Jerash starts with a bang

THIS WEEK is the start of the Jerash Festival for Arts and Culture. The timetable is till next Wednesday and will change on a weekly basis for the duration of the event.

Thurs. 24/7/97
■ South Theater: Wa'el Kfour - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Bafochi - Chile
■ Artimes Steps: Midnight Summer Dream - UK
■ Sound & Light Theater: Jordan University

Fri. 25/7/97
■ South Theater: Wa'el Kfour - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Bafochi - Chile
■ Artimes Steps: Midnight Summer Dream - UK
■ Sound & Light Theater: Science & Technology University Group

Sat. 26/7/97
■ South Theater: Wa'el Kfour - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Mediterranean Youth Orchestra - France
■ Artimes Theater: Family International
■ Sound & Light Theater: Shleswig Holsten - Germany

Sun. 27/7/97
■ South Theater: Al Ahli Club - Jordan

Mon. 28/7/97
■ South Theater: Asi Hallani - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Amar Cord Quarter - Poland
■ Artimes: B.L.T. Much Abo about nothing - UK
■ Sound & Light Theater: South Africa

Tue. 29/7/97
■ South Theater: Asi Hallani - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Fashion Show - Hanna Sadek
■ Artimes: B.L.T. Much Abo about nothing - UK
■ Sound & Light Theater: South Africa

Wed. 30/7/97
■ South Theater: Asi Hallani - Lebanon
■ North Theater: Fashion Show - Hanna Sadek
■ Artimes: Rozzana Group - Jordan
■ Sound & Light Theater: Kargounides Group - Greece

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Hey! Hey! Hey! ... Who's the wiseguy that just turned down the thermostat?"



"And here's the jewel of my collection, purchased for a king's ransom from a one-eyed man in Istanbul. ... I give you Zuzu's petals."

AGENDA

Exhibitions
■ "Jerusalem in Danger" photo exhibition by Palestinian photographer Khalid Al Zaghafat continues at the Modern Educational School till 31 July.
■ Photography exhibition by Jan Kassay, continues at the French Cultural Centre till 29 July.
■ Artworks of Ali Al Ghoul continues at the Greater Amman Municipality Cultural Dept till 31 July.
■ "The Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition" showing the works of more than 60 artists from the Arab world, continues at Darat al Funun, runs till 24 July.

Film
■ *Le ruffian* at The French Cultural Center, Monday 21 July, at 8:30 pm. (Fr.)
■ *Haw Green Was My Valley* at British Council, Tuesday 29 July, at 5:00 pm. (Eng.)
■ *The Page Master* at British Council, Wednesday 30 July, at 5:00 pm. (Eng.)
■ *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the American Center, Thursday 30 July, at 5:00 pm. (Eng.)

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 26 July - 1 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:35—French Programs
4:30—In The Wild
5:30—Blue Heelers
6:10—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Ties that Bind
8:30—Prison
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Macgyver
11:15—Feature Film

SUNDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:35—French Programs
4:05—America's Home Video
4:30—Energy Express
5:15—American Chart Show
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
9:10—National Geographic
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—One West Walkiki
11:15—Sisters

MONDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:40—Spirou
4:05—Neighbors
4:30—Deep Water Haven
5:00—Ocean Girl
5:15—Nature By Profession
6:10—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Murphy Brown
9:10—Highlander



America's Chart Show, Sunday at 5:15 pm

10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Law and Order
11:15—Homicide

TUESDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:35—French Programs
4:00—Super Sport Follie
4:30—Dog House
5:00—Square on TV
5:10—The Album Show
6:10—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Coach
8:00—Tilt
8:30—Encounter
9:10—Nature of Things
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—West Beach
11:15—Drug Wars

WEDNESDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:35—French Programs
4:05—Neighbors
4:30—Spell Binder
5:30—Forests of The World
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Soldier's Diary
8:30—Challenges (Local talk show)
9:10—Spencer for Hire
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Land's End
11:00—American Gothic

THURSDAY
3:30—Holy Koran
3:35—French Programs

4:05—Hey Dad
4:30—He Shoots He Scores
5:15—Varieties
6:10—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Submarines (Doc.)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
11:00—Taratata

FRIDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Leo the Lion (Cartoon)
2:30—Cartoons
3:00—French Programs
4:00—Family Matters

SAMEDI
3:40—Les Mondes Fantastiques
Emission de jeux pour les jeunes
6:00—Documentaire
52 sur la une - "Graine de gagnant: comment motiver les jeunes à pratiquer un sport?"
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
L'auif de Colomb

DIMANCHE
3:40—Les Mondes Fantastiques
6:00—Magazine
Faut pas rêver
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous
Ziva

LUNDI
3:40—Les Mondes Fantastiques
6:00—Thalassie
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq : les voitures électriques et le Nautille

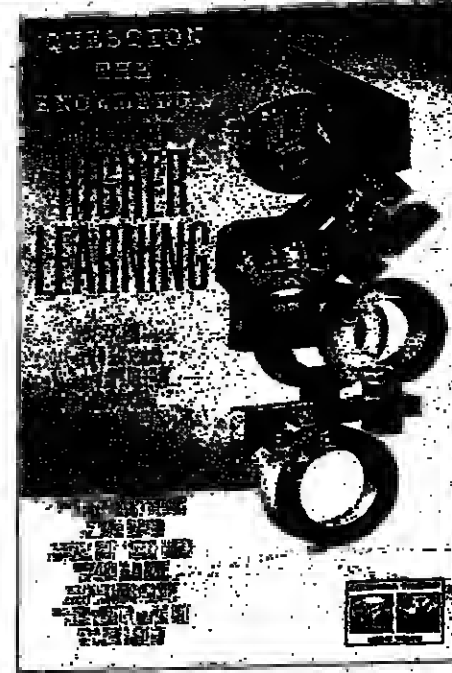
MARDI
3:40—Les Mondes

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): Liar Liar
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): The Good Son
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Jerry Maguire
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Tin Cup
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Spacejam

Highlight of the week at the Pleasure Dome

● **Higher Learning:** They came here to learn how to think. What they picked up was a strategy to survive. The campus of fictitious Columbus University is a microcosm for America where people of every race, color and creed come together. A contemporary drama that charts a semester in the lives of a handful of students, "Higher Learning" confronts issues of identity, diversity, sexism and escalating racial tensions. Former high school track star Malik Williams (Omar Epps) thinks he can cruise through his first year of college until he learns he has to run faster and harder to earn his track scholarship. Freshman Kristan Connor's (Kristy Swanson) dates were different in high school - they stopped when she said no. Remy (Michael Rapaport), thought college would be like one by party until he learns that it is a party somewhere, he's not invited.



Video Releases

Superior Releases from Warner Brothers!

■ **Tyson:** Yes, he was disqualified for being a biting boxer but surely does not disqualify this portrait of his life. P.S. he was arrested 38 times by the age of 13!

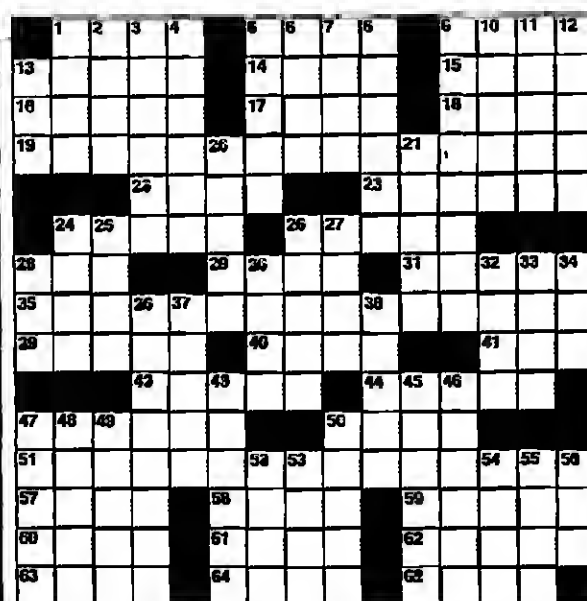
■ **Copycat:** Criminal psychologist (Wearer) is an expert on serial killers. She's gotten so close to unlocking the psyches of her previous subjects that one... an incurable psychopath almost murdered her. She and an ambitious female detective (Hunter) find themselves locked in a struggle to find a serial killer who is copying the methods of infamous serial killers of the past in his crimes.

■ **Hot Shots:** This is the real McCony of comedies: you will laugh your way all through this movie that takes the "Mickey" of "91/2 weeks." "Top Gun" and many other. Not for the faint hearted, this is a story of a very unlikely air force squadron training for operation "Sleepy Weasel" while some outside defense contractor will do anything to sabotage their operation.

■ **Mute Witness:** An exhilarating Horror/Suspense film that gleefully ricochets from laughter in terror. People in the cheap film industry find themselves trapped in a complex web of lies and dangers. Anthony Waller (producer/director) has made a funny, scary and accessible debut that offers audiences a real worthwhile product.

Courtesy: "The Pleasure Dome"
Tel: 676558 - Fax: 5538087

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
- Baseball
 - Luminox
 - Actor Johnny
 - Chameleon
 - Idol
 - Gad
 - Frank leap
 - Kind of water
 - In balance
 - morgana
 - Foot
 - Small comb
 - Hank
 - Bin in
 - Moola
 - king
 - Liberline
 - Alaska city
 - Yard
 - U.S.
 - president
 - Footstep
 - Small amount
 - Full of tooth
 - Certain
 - Mongolian
 - var.
 - Canopy
 - Trailer
 - Mill
 - "Charley's"
 - Chinese
 - border river
 - Use a
 - Hay or joy
 - end
 - Vain site
 - Barlin
 - Fashionable
 - resort
 - Hotchpotch
 - Ruby and
 - Sandra
 - DOWN
 - Golden Rule
 - Saltic Seal
 - Noraska
 - river
 - Seamstress
 - e.g.
 - Doctrine
 - Kind of feast
 - Finished
 - Stand for
 - Plant with
 - yellow
 - flowers
 - Field of
 - Glory
 - Part of a
 - corolla
 - lectures
 - branch of geology
 - Outfit
 - Indonesian
 - islands
 - Carpentry
 - item
 - Disregard
 - Norse writing
 - Nervous
 - Hyys
 - Craving
 - Actor Gary
 - of Texas
 - Geom.
 - shape

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—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: You'll be more sensitive to the wants and needs of others. The focus is on cleanliness.

Aries (March 21-April 19). You feel like playing. Make some time for that — the pace quickens soon and doesn't let up.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Go straight home after work. Your roommate wants to talk to you. If you don't have a roommate, take somebody home with you, to talk.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Money's your theme. Study ways to make more. Give your place a thorough cleaning. Get some new throw pillows, too.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). You're in fine form. Call in money that's owed to you. Entertain at home and just be lazy.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). A lot of what you're doing is taking place behind the scenes. Clear up an old misunderstanding. Get your money into neat little rows.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your friends are your key to success. Have one help you with a personal matter. They encourage you to try your best.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your career's the most important thing for you. Friends can help, but don't get distracted from the job. The pressure starts to intensify and gets worse.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). This is a good time to take your vacation. Travel by water is favored. It may be hard to get away from an authority figure, though.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your theme is finding more money and learning how to spend it wisely. You'll be trying to talk your boss or the director of your department into increasing your funding. Neatness counts.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your partner or mate wants all your attention. Pool your money to get something you both want. Figure out a way to get out of town.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You have to work, big time. Meet with your mate to set your agenda. Fill out the paperwork to get the money you need.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). If you're not already in love, you will be soon. You still have to go to work, though.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You'll spend more than usual this year, but that's OK. You'll make more than usual, too.

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Bridge

By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

East-West vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ AK 7 4
♥ A J 8 6
♦ Q
♣ A J 8 4

WEST
♠ 10 6 3
♥ 4 3 2
♦ J 7 6 4
♣ 9 5 3

EAST
♠ Q 9 8 2
♥ Q 7 5
♦ 8 2
♣ Q 10 7 2

SOUTH
♠ J 5
♥ K 10 9
♦ A K 10 9 5 3
♣ K 6

The bidding:
West North East South
Pass 1♣ Pass 1♠
Pass 1♥ Pass 3♠
Pass 4NT Pass 5♥
Pass 6♠ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠
When faced with a two-way finesse, one method of choosing which way to take it is to gaze skyward for divine guidance. More prone to succeed is finding a way of

having the opponents broach the suit for you.

North-South bid well to reach six diamonds. Four no trump was Keycard Blackwood in which the king of trumps (diamonds in this case) counts as an ace. North judged well to choose diamonds as the trump suit — the queen of a suit in which partner jumped is adequate support, especially opposite the ace-king.

Declarer won the spade lead in dummy, cashed the queen of diamonds, then came to hand with the king of clubs to cash the ace and king of diamonds. Leaving the master trump with West, declarer started sinning in trumps.

A club to the ace was followed by a club ruff in the hope the queen might drop. No luck. Ace of spades and a spade ruff was followed by a lead to the ace of hearts and another club ruff. West was forced to over-ruff but, as the cards lay, declarer didn't mind a bit. Now West was down to nothing but hearts, and the lead of that suit was into declarer's combined tenace.

This hand is typical of expert play. A good technician will go to any lengths to avoid taking a finesse as long as the contract is not endangered in the process.

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The Umbro soccer tournament live on Orbit-ESPN sports

ORBIT-ESPN Sports continues its built-up to the new Premier League season which starts on Saturday, August 9 with live coverage of the Umbro Soccer Tournament airing on Saturday, July 26 and Sunday, July 27.

The first day games between Everton and Ajax and Chelsea and Newcastle United will air on channel 6 starting at 12:55 pm GMT, while Sunday's consolation game and final will air on channel 18 and 88 starting at 12:55 pm GMT.

The King George VI and the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes will feature three thoroughbreds that have won most of world's richest prizes. Singpiel won the Dubai World Cup, Filisudski came in first in the Breeders' Cup Turf, while Heliasso was victorious in the Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe.

Orbit-ESPN's live broadcasting coverage continues from Tuesday, July 29 to Saturday, August 2 with the Goodwood Meeting. ■



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YOFAR

FOIMT

KHONUO

BLOSMY

Print answer here: THE

Print answer here: THE

Print answer here: THE

Print answer here: THE

Print answer here: THE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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Would You Believe...

People tend to think of Arizona when they think of deserts. But New Mexico is actually called the Cactus State.

Edgar Allen Poe is generally regarded as the inventor of the modern detective story.

India's first national elections were not held until 1952.

The largest order of mammals is rodents.

Lake Superior is 1,300 feet deep at the deepest part.

Gangster Al Capone died, not in a hall of bullets, but of syphilis.

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كنا من اننا اصل

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

20 minutes d'eXXXtraits pas très islamiques à Dubaï

● C'était un samedi soir comme les autres. Sur la chaîne Canal France International (CFI), rien de très excitant : le programme familial habituel. Tranquillément installés devant leur poste, les téléspectateurs de Dubaï (Emirats Arabes Unis) n'attendaient rien de spécial ce soir-là. Et puis les images se brouillent, se transforment et pendant une vingtaine de minutes, l'émission pour tous disparaît pour être remplacée par le film pornographique de Canal plus (chaîne privée française). Emoi dans les foyers et à la direction de l'Organisation arabe de communication par satellite (Arabsat), qui annonce dans les 24 heures l'annulation du contrat de diffusion avec CFI. Motifs invoqués : « non respect par la chaîne française de ses engagements et émission contraire à la morale et aux traditions islamiques ». Comment expliquer ce changement de programmation ? Erreur humaine, chacun le sait. « Il ne s'agit pas d'une erreur de CFI, qui passait tranquillement des émissions pédagogiques (...) mais de France Télécom », se défend le directeur général de la chaîne, Claude Esclatine. Une simple « ambiguïté » de boutons, voilà tout. Les techniciens français ont en effet reconnu qu'une inversion accidentelle de canaux dans un centre de France Télécom à Paris était à l'origine de cette diffusion imprévue. CFI pourrait se rendre prochainement à Ryad (Arabie Saoudite) au siège d'Arabsat, pour tenter de rattraper le coup. La boucle de programmes français pour l'étranger assure d'autre part sceller à « ne pas choquer » ses clients. Trop tard. Le mal (ou le bien ?) semble déjà fait.

Vous voulez écrire en français ?

Alors n'hésitez pas à collaborer à la rédaction du Jourdain. Que vous soyez passionné d'économie, de politique, de faits de société ou de culture, vos articles nous intéressent. Pour tout renseignement, contactez Yannick Lainé au Star au 645 380 / 652 380.

Nouvelles du Pays

Le choc des allocs

Le nouveau premier ministre français envisage de placer les prestations familiales sous condition de ressources. Les ménages qui touchent plus de 25.000 francs de revenus n'auraient plus droit aux allocations pour leurs enfants. Une mesure à la symbolique forte.

La réforme annoncée des allocations a fait bondir ce mois-ci l'ensemble des associations familiales. Le premier ministre Lionel Jospin s'attaque en effet à un tabou auquel aucun gouvernement de l'après-guerre n'avait osé toucher. L'Union nationale des associations familiales (8500 associations et un million de foyers) est particulièrement sévère : « c'est tout le canevas de la justice sociale », écrit Lucien Bouis, administrateur de l'Unaf, « on veut faire payer les riches pour les familles pauvres, soit. Mais 25.000 francs, c'est le revenu d'un couple d'insulteurs. Quant à ceux qui n'ont pas d'enfants, ils ne seront pas mis à contribution. Or la politique familiale, c'est la prise en compte des enfants par la société et la reconnaissance de l'effort financier des familles ».



Aujourd'hui la France compte quatre millions d'allocataires. Jusqu'à présent toutes les familles reçoivent, selon le principe républicain de l'égalité, le même montant d'allocations, quels que soient leurs revenus : 671 francs par mois pour deux enfants, 1531 francs pour trois, et 860 francs par enfant supplémentaire à partir du quatrième. Bref, à condition d'avoir deux enfants, les Français disposent d'un soutien financier avantageux pour élever leur progéniture. Ils reçoivent l'argent de la caisse d'allocations familiales qui est financée par les cotisations salariales et patronales.

Telle qu'envisagée actuellement, la réforme Jospin provoquerait la fin des allocations pour environ 400 000 familles. Mais rien n'est encore décidé. Suite à l'automne où le projet sera discuté devant le Parlement.

Yannick Lainé

Une caisse pour les indigents

Il n'y a pas d'allocations familiales en Jordanie. Dans un pays où le taux de natalité est encore très élevé, l'Etat cherche à limiter les naissances. En revanche, il existe une caisse d'aide nationale pour les familles en difficulté.

Cette caisse, créée en 1986, concerne les familles aux ressources insuffisantes ainsi que les handicapés. Elle est financée par des cotisations des employeurs et des salariés. Elle dispose d'un personnel médical et social pour aider les familles en difficulté. Elle a financé la construction de maisons pour les familles en difficulté. Elle a financé la construction de maisons pour les familles en difficulté. Elle a financé la construction de maisons pour les familles en difficulté.

diverses ou abandonnées, ainsi que les orphelins mineurs au chômage», détaille Khalid Ghannem. La somme allouée varie entre 20 et 60 dinars, selon les situations familiales (en fonction du logement, par exemple). Les foyers, au-delà de six enfants, ne peuvent pas bénéficier des allocations. Une mesure pour limiter le nombre des naissances.

qui vivent sous le seuil de pauvreté (120 dinars par mois), soit 21% de la population. 2. La caisse finance des projets de recherche à l'emploi. Cela concerne les handicapés et les gens incapables de subvenir aux besoins de leur famille. Exemple : vous êtes pauvre comme Job mais plein de dynamisme. Vous voulez monter votre propre épicerie. La caisse vous offre alors un prêt sans intérêts (maximum 3000 dinars) remboursable sur 65% après dix ans. Depuis 1986, la fondation a financé plus de 7000 projets.

Enfin, il y a les urgences. C'est le cas de ménages qui n'ont jamais été inscrits à la caisse mais dont le soutien de famille meurt ou tombe gravement malade. La fondation leur verse alors 100 dinars.

Nahed Al-Khlouf

On n'avait pas vu

celui depuis la seconde affaire Luth Chubbell. L'ancien député, condamné à 4 ans de prison pour avoir insulté le roi et finalement libéré sous la pression internationale. Aucun procès n'a suscité autant d'intérêt dans l'opinion publique que celui de Dakamseh. Ce caporal avait tué en mars dernier sept lycéennes israéliennes en excursion à Baqoura, territoire jordanien loué à Israël aux termes du traité de paix.

Le verdict prononcé samedi dernier par le président du conseil militaire est plus éloquent que la sentence requise par le procureur. Celui-ci réclamait la peine capitale. Le conseil militaire a jugé que « le crime pétré était volontaire » mais « non prémédité ». Comment expliquer cette condamnation alors que le roi, lui-même, aurait préféré que les collègues de Dakamseh l'exécutent sur le champ ?

Le procès a pris un tournant fin juin lorsque le conseil militaire a décidé de prendre connaissance de deux rapports médicaux sur la santé psychique du soldat. L'avocat de la défense s'y est opposé car les deux rapports ne figuraient pas sur la liste des preuves présentées au préalable par le procureur. L'objection n'a cependant pas été retenue et l'examen médical du caporal a montré qu'il souffrait effectivement de troubles psychiatriques. A partir de là, les observateurs ont remarqué que les questions posées le 26 juin dernier par le procureur à Dakamseh étaient moins féroces que prévues. Certains y ont vu une manière de préparer le terrain pour une peine moins lourde.

D'autres facteurs ont joué dans l'atténuation de la sentence, ce qui n'enlève rien à la rigueur juridique du procès.



A l'annonce du verdict, plusieurs membres de la famille du soldat Dakamseh, sont allés crier des slogans anti-israéliens à la sortie du tribunal du conseil militaire.

D'abord, il y a la plaidoirie de la défense. Un discours très bien structuré de 220 pages qui a réitéré point par point de nombreux faits et preuves présentés par le parquet.

Chapitre politique

Ensuite, le conseil militaire ne pouvait ignorer le climat qui règne dans le pays depuis quelques semaines. En réaction aux pratiques répressives et violentes de l'armée israélienne et des colonisateurs juifs contre les Palestiniens de Cisjordanie, une sympathie croissante s'est cristallisée autour de Dakamseh. Plusieurs Jordaniens, que nous avons rencontrés peu après l'annonce du verdict, trouvaient la condamnation très dure. « Des sionistes tuent des dizaines de Palestiniens et on ne les traduit même pas devant la justice israélienne », s'indigne Ismail Awad, électricien à Amman. « Dakamseh n'a fait que se venger des crimes

que les soldats israéliens commettent tous les jours contre nos frères palestiniens à Hébron et ailleurs », justifie Ahmed Silwadi, marchand de fruits et légumes à Sweileh, près d'Amman.

Enfin, exécuter Ahmed Dakamseh, c'était en faire un héros national et alimenter les rumeurs tribales que le régime a toujours soigneusement évitées, surtout quand la politique s'en mêle.

En effet, le chapitre juridique de l'affaire est clos, mais le chapitre politique se poursuit.

Le verdict doit être ratifié dans les semaines à venir par le chef d'Etat-major de l'armée et par le roi Hussein. Un geste éloquent est-il une fois encore envisageable ? Il est en tout cas toujours temps d'affirmer, à l'instar du quotidien israélien Ma'ariv, que « la meilleure façon de mettre fin à l'apparition de fous de chaque côté, c'est d'appliquer les accords de paix le plus tôt possible ».

Suleiman Sweiss

Exposition

Salt sous le pinceau



A Salt, se trouve la plus ancienne école secondaire du royaume, construite en 1924.

Les tableaux de Mohammad Al-Jaloos rappellent le passé glorieux de Salt. Liée à Naplouse, c'était l'une des villes les plus importantes de Transjordanie. Elle a été un centre agricole et religieux reconnu et sa forteresse, toujours reconstruite à travers les siècles, est la preuve de son rôle stratégique dans la région. Le peintre a voulu retrouver aussi la simplicité et le charme du Salt ancien et de ses vieilles maisons ottomanes en pierres jaunes, en négligeant tout ce qui a pu, avec le temps, affecter cette beauté. Le soleil, le ciel, la terre sont les ingrédients de ce plat pictural, assaisonné de couleurs pastels. Les 62 tableaux de l'exposition montrent ainsi les maisons, les écoles, les mosquées, la basse-ville, il y a 30 ans : Salt dans toute sa simplicité. « J'avais 6 ans en 1966 quand je marchais dans les rues de Salt », raconte l'artiste, né à Amman, et depuis cette date, j'ai toujours eu envie de dessiner cette ville. « J'adorais son architecture et ses maisons aux pierres jaunes, extraites de la montagne d'Al-Balqa ».

En contre-point, ces œuvres révèlent les carences de la protection du patrimoine. La législation pour sauvegarder les témoignages et les vestiges du vieux Salt n'est pas vraiment efficace. La mairie ne peut notamment interdire les habitants de détruire les maisons anciennes. Les peintures de Mohammad Al-Jaloos sont aussi là pour alerter nos mémoires.

Bayan Salman

Exposition Les maisons de Salt, de Mohammad Al-Jaloos, organisée par l'association privée Al-Gamouh, jusqu'au 30 juillet prochain à Khaldia, Amman. Renseignements au 541 2 198 ou 541 2 957.

C'est la vie

L'agenda-français d'Amman

Exposition

Jusqu'au 29 juillet au Centre culturel français, la photographe Jan Kassay expose ses plus beaux clichés de fleurs.

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à l'acteur Lino Ventura. Les misérables de Robert Hossein (1982). Adaptation de l'œuvre de Victor Hugo, proche du spectacle monté par le même metteur en scène. Lundi 28 juillet à 20h30 au Centre culturel français.

Prêt-à-porter Ma chemise : du 100% déjà mis !

Vous aimez les frêpes alors précipitez-vous dans les rues du centre d'Amman. Ici, jupes, chemises, pantalons déjà portés en Europe se vendent comme des petits pains. Pour les Jordaniens, ce sont des vêtements qui gardent encore un très bon rapport qualité-prix. Un marché qui n'a jamais cessé de s'étendre ou comment faire du neuf avec du vieux.

A Amman, il y a

plus d'une centaine de magasins qui pratiquent ce type de commerce, surtout dans le centre-ville et à al-Wehdat. Abou Zarif al-Ajouri est grossiste. Il importe spécialement des vêtements venus des pays européens. Là-bas, des sociétés sont spécialisées dans le ramassage et le triage des vêtements qu'elles envoient ensuite notamment dans les pays du Moyen-Orient sous forme de palettes, d'où le nom de « baleh » en arabe, utilisé pour désigner cette marchandise et sa provenance. « On nous vend la marchandise au kilo », explique Abou Zarif, cela coûte en générale entre 1,7 et 5 dinars le kilo selon la qualité, auxquels il faut ajouter les frais de transport et la taxe à la vente de 10%. La grossiste achète toujours de la marchandise déjà portée et de moindre qualité, « parce que les gens ici veulent le moins cher possible ». Le marché reste donc très porteur même s'il y a toujours des mauvaises surprises : « sur des 200 pièces de la palette, 50 sont de très mauvaise qualité et sont donc invendables », ajoute avec résignation Abou Zarif.



Pour une chemise achetée 400 fils, le commerçant peut la revendre jusqu'à 5 dinars.

c'est de la bonne qualité comparée aux produits fabriqués en Jordanie. « Ici, quand vous achetez une nouvelle chemise ou un pantalon, après deux lavages, ils sont foutus alors que les vôtres, vous les avez payés un prix exorbitant », analyse en connoisseur un commerçant d'al-Wehdat.

Mieux encore. Certains récupèrent ce qu'ils appellent de la marchandise « stock ». Ce sont des vêtements de première qualité, presque neufs, qui n'ont été portés qu'une ou deux fois. Mais ils sont vendus comme s'ils étaient neufs et à des prix très élevés parfois plus que des vêtements jordaniens véritablement neufs. Le détaillant achète ainsi une chemise « stock » 600 fils pour la revendre 15 à 20 JD ! Mais les détaillants ont aussi leurs petits malheurs. « Quand

Azmi Khilfat

est le directeur du département des métiers et du contrôle du tourisme et il est formel : « le ministère a reçu des plaintes dans plusieurs agences de tourisme de Jordanie, concernant le niveau médiocre de certains guides ». Un cours a donc été mis en place pour recueillir le tir : dix sessions de neuf jours, du 21 juin à la fin du mois d'août, chacune suivie d'un examen oral et écrit, le tout pour 90 dinars.

Pour l'instant, seuls les guides certifiés après 1994 échappent à ce retour brutal sur les bancs de l'école. Le ministère estime que leurs connaissances, fraîchement acquises, leur permettent d'assurer une bonne prestation auprès du public.

« Avec cet examen, nous réévaluons le niveau des guides depuis qu'ils ont obtenu leur permis », explique simplement Azmi Khilfat, il permettra aussi de redéfinir les différentes catégories de guides. Les guides jordaniens sont en effet classés en fonction du résultat de leur examen initial. Catégorie A : ils peuvent travailler sur tout le royaume ; catégorie B : leur champ d'action se limite à 8 provinces ; catégorie C : ils restent cantonnés dans la région où ils habitent. Tous les guides de la troisième catégorie, même s'ils ont obtenu leur permis après 94 sont obligés de suivre le cours de remise à niveau.

Touristes amahqués

« Le ministère du tourisme a pris sa décision sans nous consulter », réagit Maha Anabawir, guide elle-même et directrice du comité social au sein de la société des guides touristiques. « L'argument ministériel selon

Tourisme

Les guides retournent à l'école

Le petit monde du tourisme a été pris de court. Le ministère du Tourisme et des Antiquités a décidé d'imposer une formation de neuf jours aux guides certifiés avant 94. Objectif : relever le niveau. Mais parmi les guides, on craint plutôt que cette mesure ne vise à diminuer les effectifs.

Lequel les guides ne sont pas qualifiés est étrange. L'émigration de son côté Nawar Joudah, une autre guide touristique, « il ne fallait pas leur donner de permis s'ils n'étaient pas compétents ». Et Nawar de rappeler que ces fameux permis sont justement délivrés par le ministère.

Plusieurs guides trouvent aussi très injuste de sanctionner l'ensemble de la profession pour les erreurs de quelques-uns.

« Certains sont en faute, c'est un fait », ils essaient d'argumenter le touriste, dont des informations erronées ou ne maîtrisent pas les langues étrangères. Au ministère de prouver ces brèches galantes mais pas tout le monde ». S'insurge la jeune guide.

Une autre idée traîne également parmi les guides : le ministère voudrait limiter leur nombre parce qu'il y en a plus que le pays n'en a besoin. Azmi Khilfat rejette totalement cette hypothèse. « Ce n'est pas dans la politique du ministère de mettre les gens au chômage ; nous allons organiser des cours pour les guides qui n'ont pas réussi leur examen oral et écrit pour qu'ils puissent retrouver leur travail le plus tôt possible », assure-t-il. Le débat se

poursuit entre le ministère et la Société des guides touristiques mais la décision est déjà appliquée. Tous les jours, les guides qui sont inscrits aux cours tils seraient environ 300, soit la moitié du nombre total de guides dans le royaume se rendent à l'université de Jordanie de 9 heures à 16 heures. Comme de simples écoliers, ils craignent d'échouer à l'examen final. Mais plus qu'un diplôme, c'est un emploi qui est en jeu.

Samia Abu Sharar



Les guides touristiques sont plus de 600 en Jordanie. Ici, l'un d'eux explique en allemand la carte-mosaïque de l'église Saint-Georges à Madaba.

Sabah Hadidi

TEHRAN, Iran—On the eve of the Cannes Film Festival, Abbas Kiarostami, Iran's best-known filmmaker, still didn't have permission to go.

Each day as the May festival drew closer, he would fight with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for approval to take his new film, "A Taste of Cherry," to the festival despite its risqué subject matter. But the censors simply wouldn't allow it.

Finally, well after the cut off date for submission of films, the minister—perhaps realizing how embarrassing it would be to keep Iran's most famous director home simply because his film dealt candidly with the issue of suicide—reluctantly relented. Kiarostami jumped on a plane, sent the film off apologetically to the judges, and immediately after arriving, won the coveted Golden Palm, the top award at the festival.

But at home in Iran, the award received little attention. When Kiarostami returned, official praise was restrained—and what comment there was dealt more with the scandalous, un-Islamic kiss he received from actress Catherine Deneuve at the awards ceremony. Instead of reveling in his success, Kiarostami refused requests for interviews, saying that times were tense and he didn't want to upset the authorities.

"What other choice does he have?" asked one friend in Tehran, who declined to be identified. "He must work with the system, or he will not be allowed to work at all."

Kiarostami's quiet dispute with the censors was a familiar one to moviemakers here. The Iranian film industry churns out more than 50 movies a year, and some 75 million movie tickets are sold here annually. That's more—although few know it—in America, and few believe it where they hear it—the industry here is one of the most admired in the world, making high-quality, international award-winning movies. Directors such as Kiarostami, Dariush Mehjuri and Mohsen Makhmalbaf have won repeated awards in Lucarno, Switzerland; Turin, Italy; Cannes; and Tokyo, among other places, for films about family, community and poverty that touch on sensitive personal and social issues.

But cinema in Iran is troubled. In recent years, the militant Islamic government—which must approve all films before and after they're shot—has been withdrawing its support from more serious films in favor of commercial, action-packed movies that can be used more easily to spread the message of the Islamic revolution in the country's ongoing propaganda war against the West.

At the same time, the regime has cracked down still further on those films that make use of sexual imagery or which are perceived as excessively "Western." unfavorable to Islam, or even slightly anti-government. Censorship has become more heavy-handed in the last four years, with government officials refusing to grant permission for more serious films.

cutting entire scenes out of others, changing names and dialogue, removing characters—and not infrequently, banning controversial films outright.

"People in the world now are looking for Islamic and humanitarian values in our films," said Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mir Salim. To that end, Salim set out a list of unbreakable rules for filmmakers during a meeting in 1996, including the following: Movies may not show an unveiled woman or the "curves"

of her body or a woman running or wearing makeup. A villain may not have a name from the Koran such as Muhammad or Hussin or Ali; instead, villains should have old Iranian names such as Houshang and Kumbiz. Heroes, by contrast, may not wear bow ties or neckties, both of which are symbols of the decadent West. Families may not argue. Unrelated men and women may not touch or kiss.

That's just the beginning. Singing and dancing by women are forbidden and lin-

gering eye contact between men and women is discouraged. A religious person may not be a villain, and members of the armed forces may not be portrayed in untidy clothes or behaving in an unseemly or unjust manner. Unhappy endings are discouraged as well.

"They obviously want films made so that any idiot can understand the clear message about how people should behave," said one film industry professional who asked not to be identified.

"It's a silly, unrealistic way to make movies."

Consider this year's Fajr Film Festival near Tehran. The big picture pushed by the government was not Kiarostami's "A Taste of Cherry" or any of the films by well-known, serious directors. Instead, it was an action picture called "Sandstorm," an adventure movie with little to recommend it and a political theme that is hardly groundbreaking here: the evil of

Modeled on a Stallone or a Schwarzenegger movie, "Sandstorm" is based on a real-life incident in which American forces, seeking to rescue the hostages held in Tehran in 1980, stumbled across and briefly captured a bus full of Iranians. During the course of the movie, the evil Americans slap the Iranians around and verbally abuse them, while the heroic Iranians seek to escape.

"It was garbage," said one Iranian film critic who asked not to be identified.

Or consider the case of Tahmineh Milani, an award-winning director whose work has been praised internationally, and who adhered, she felt, to Islamic ideals. She always chose safe, politically acceptable topics for her films, she says.

Yet when it came to her last movie, the subject of which was environmental consciousness among children, she fell afoul of the ministry. It's not quite clear what was wrong, but one problem was that her central character, an 8-year-old girl, wasn't wearing a headscarf at all times—even though girls in Iran aren't required to do so until turning 9. With the censorship office under the control of a new bureaucrat, the film was banned and the 36-year-old director was barred from making films again.

"He (the censor) believed women should not bend in films, they should not run and they should not be shot in close-ups," Milani said. "He was so sick, he thought everything was erotic—and he caused movies to be cut to pieces."

After the revolution that brought Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power in 1979, authorities grew even more strict about what could and could not be shown. While onscreen sexual content had always been frowned upon, political content was now being scrutinized far more closely. For a few years after the revolution, the Iranian film industry ground to a halt.

But at a time when 50 percent of Iranians were illiterate, officials of the new regime soon recognized the propaganda potential of film.

Although many of the films that were made were standard-fare melodramas, war pictures about the Iran-Iraq conflict, shoot-'em-up movies about drug dealers and gangsters, the government also allowed more serious movies to be made. But in the last two or three years, the atmosphere has changed, censorship has been lightened and the process has become more difficult.

The one ray of hope for Iranian movie-makers is the recent election of Mohammad Khatami as president. Khatami, a former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, was far more flexible and liberal when he held the job than the current minister. In fact, many of the greatest Iranian movies—and the ones that come closest to controversy and social criticism—were made during the Khatami years in the early 1990s. ■

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To

by David Dawkins

THE FACES of the
and the other show
hate, contempt, and
what else? To a
Wolsey in *King Lear*,
megaphone from Moscow
Gallagher in *Company*, and
Francesca in *Passion*.
Miller. In *Company*

B

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For more

To boldly go into the next millennium

By David Downton And Avril Groom

THE FACES of those in the front row and the clothes they wore at the Paris haute couture shows said it all: Hollywood wives Kate Capshaw and Rita Wilson in vintage-looking bias cut, megastar Demi Moore in a simple black Galliano slipdress and ruffled cardigan, Princess Pavlos, nee Marie-Chantal Miller, in easy-fitting soft green

Chanel, the crop-haired Princess Rosario Saxe-Coburg in a plain black vest. American financier's wife Nan Kempner, twice as old and twice as thin as any of them, is a couture perennial who always looks of the moment. Ivana Trump, in an acid yellow power suit, was the only throwback.

There is unquestionably both a new mood and a new client, a combination that may well see off Pierre Berge's warnings of an industry deficit by the millennium. As Yves St Laurent's partner, he is probably eating his words Yves' pure and sumptuous evening wear was some of his best-received in years.

The mood, like the clients, is younger, less formal but as rich as ever. The French couture establishment may have squealed when Bernard Arnault of LVMH installed John Galliano and Alexander McQueen at two of his marques, Dior and Givenchy, but it is this odd couple who have revitalised the interest and other designers are following.

The boys are making the most of their new toys, revelling in being able to use the traditional skills of a couture atelier and the world's best bead and embroiderers.

McQueen's collection for Givenchy veered from the Highlands of Scotland to China and Catholic Spain but majored on an 18th century frock-coat shape, the perfect vehicle for both McQueen's tailoring skills and rich embellishment. Galliano is an old hand at extra-

ganzas and his fin de siecle world tour for Dior was so haunting, romantic and beautiful that even the impossible-to-wear show-stoppers will doubtless be worn, for the sheer fun of it.

The Brits have hardly had it all their own way, and other shows produced the heart-stopping high spots of which only couture is capable. Christian Lacroix's exuberant art fabrics brilliant rough-woven tweed or hand-painted devore velvet were encrusted with textured lace, in effortless-looking puffs, swirls and delicate lingerie styles.

Jean-Paul Gaultier transported us to the steppes of Hungary, with swirling, fur-trimmed coats, bold black lace and hussar braid, giving romance to his impeccable tailoring. His

move into couture has encouraged other non-traditional designers such as Adeline Andre and ex-Balenciaga Josephus Meilichior Thimister who, both in their own ways, pursue a fine, delicate minimalism, to show small special-order collections.

St Laurent provided the most dramatic moment, opening his show with a full length sable coat (fur-farming is big couture news) prowling the catwalk on the panther-like African model Karoucha, who emerged from retirement to be the designer's muse for the season. His evening wear, inspired by Tudor painters and rich with jewelled black velvet, fur edgings and brilliant draped satin, exuded calm modernity after all the costume drama.

In a week of black-clad brides, Oscar de la Renta's rose-strewn wedding dress in dusky autumn colours for Pierre tailoring and fur-trimmed antique Paisleys.

Others probed less certainly into modernity. In what has sadly turned out to be his last couture collection and couture was always his most personal fashion statement, Versace's Space Age shoulder extensions and wickedly whittled leather looked forced, though the toga-dresses in "liquid" chainmail reminded us of just how innovative Versace could sometimes be.

Valentino put all the energy of his marvellous workrooms into embroidery and brocades that replicated animal skins but, in metallic finishes and body-hugging shapes, teetered on the tarty. Ungaro's lace trims and draped wraps have a light touch but the late 1990s seem to have passed them by.

Then there is the enigma of Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel. In a show of many beautiful but sombre, stormy things, there were strange ironic references to other designers Yamamoto's quirky tailoring, Calvin Klein's minimal asymmetry. Helmut



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